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but I have to move on"

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MAN ON A
MISSION

"This is a win that tops all
win lists" – Kevin Windham

MIXdN SPECIAL

CARMICHAEL LEADS
AMERICA TO VICTORY

November 2005 £3.00



TRIAL DES NATIONS | KNIGHTER TOPS ISDE | GPs SIGN OFF IN IRELAND





**WHEN THE BEST
PREPARE FOR BATTLE,
THEY CHOOSE THE *V3* HELMET.**



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November

2005

DIRTBIKE
RIDER



Comment

THEY CAME, they saw and they kicked arse – or, to be more accurate, he came, he saw and he kicked arse! The 'he' in question is, of course, Ricky Carmichael and the 'arse' in question is a multi-national backside belonging to every country at the MX des Nations that isn't the US of A...

I suppose I shouldn't really admit this but I'd have been happier if Iran had won the Nations (this was never going to happen – they entered but didn't show up) or Guatemala or Latvia or France or absolutely anyone else in fact. Why? Because they're just so smug, so big-headed, so loud, so, so, so...so American! Now I'm not having a pop at RC, Kevin Windham and Ivan Tedesco – far from it. The US threesome did the business.

My problem's with the whole 'US MX is better than GP MX' attitude that prevails over on the other side of the pond. Yes, Ricky Carmichael is without a doubt the fastest motocrosser on the planet. Yes, they've also got the prodigiously talented James Stewart. But that's where it stops. Tedesco's no faster than Antonio Cairoli or Marc De Reuver or Tyla Ratray and Windham's no faster than Stefan Everts or Josh Coppins or Ben Townley. Now I'm not tarring everyone in America with the same brush – it's the jingoistic flag-wavers who can shout the mindless 'USA, USA' mantra the loudest who get right on my tits.

I'm not claiming that GPs are better than the AMA Nationals – what I'm saying is they're different. Both series have their pros and cons and genuine MX fans – the ones who respect any rider at the top of their game, regardless of nationality – should recognise this.

Carmichael is being lauded as the Greatest Of All Time in certain quarters of the US. That could well be true. But equally it might not be. The closest GP MX has got to RC is Everts but, even though they're racing in the same era, you could argue that Everts is at 32 now past his best while Ricky, a mere pup at 25, is in his prime. You could also argue that Everts was in his prime when he wiped the floor with everyone – including a teenaged Carmichael – at the Foxhill MX des Nations in '98. Or the following year when he went 1-1 when the des Nats stopped off in Brazil. Of course, RC was on a 125 and Everts was on a 250 back then – and that's precisely my point. To proclaim someone as the GOAT you need a level playing field and that simply doesn't exist in a sport like MX. After all, who's to say that Joel Robert wasn't in fact better than Everts?

Okay, let's move away from MX and the two times 40-minute moto shandies and into the manly world of enduros. The ISDE is the daddy of them all – six days in the saddle and the riders have to spin the spanners for themselves! All the British Trophy Team acquitted themselves brilliantly and Fast Eddy – thanks to his super-human mud-riding skills – made the E2 podium come the close of play in Slovakia. But even Paul's achievement is over-shadowed by David Knight who was in a class of his own to nail the overall win – the first ever for a Brit in the event.

The efforts of Knight, Eddy and the rest of the Trophy Team saw GB fill fourth in the final standings. Add to this a fifth by our MXdN team, second by both our male and female TdN teams and another second by our Sidecarcross des Nations team and it's been a bloody good month all round for the Brits.

In fact, I reckon with all disciplines considered we're the greatest all-round off-roading nation on the planet! Of all time! So repeat after me – with lots of air-punching – 'GB, GB, GB'...

Sean

DESTINATION

MXdN goes to Farleigh Castle for '06

THE 2006 edition of the Motocross des Nations returns to Farleigh Castle in Wiltshire on September 23/24 for its 60th running.

The grassland circuit situated near Bath is famous for its hillside step sections and previously hosted the des Nations back in 1980 when the Belgium team took home the Peter Chamberlain Trophy that's currently being looked after by Team America after their outstanding win at Ernee.

Bike-it promotions Martin Mansbridge and Steve Dixon are the men responsible for bringing the world cup of motocross back to British shores after negotiating terms with Youthstream and the FIM.

"It's fantastic for us to have the Nations again in Britain," enthuses Dixon. "We have a great

company behind the event in Bike-it and we can make sure that Farleigh will be ready for all the fans and spectators who normally come to visit this meeting from right across Europe."

To make sure the old-school venue is up to scratch for the event, master track builder Johnny Douglas Hamilton is the man in charge of preparing the track. Johnny's previously revamped the Matchams and Gore Basin circuits as well as building the excellent Sun City course pretty much from scratch so he's certainly up to the tough task in hand.

A new official website for the event will be launched soon and can be found at www.mxofnations.com

MXdN team-mates Carl Nunn and Billy MacKenzie can't wait for '06



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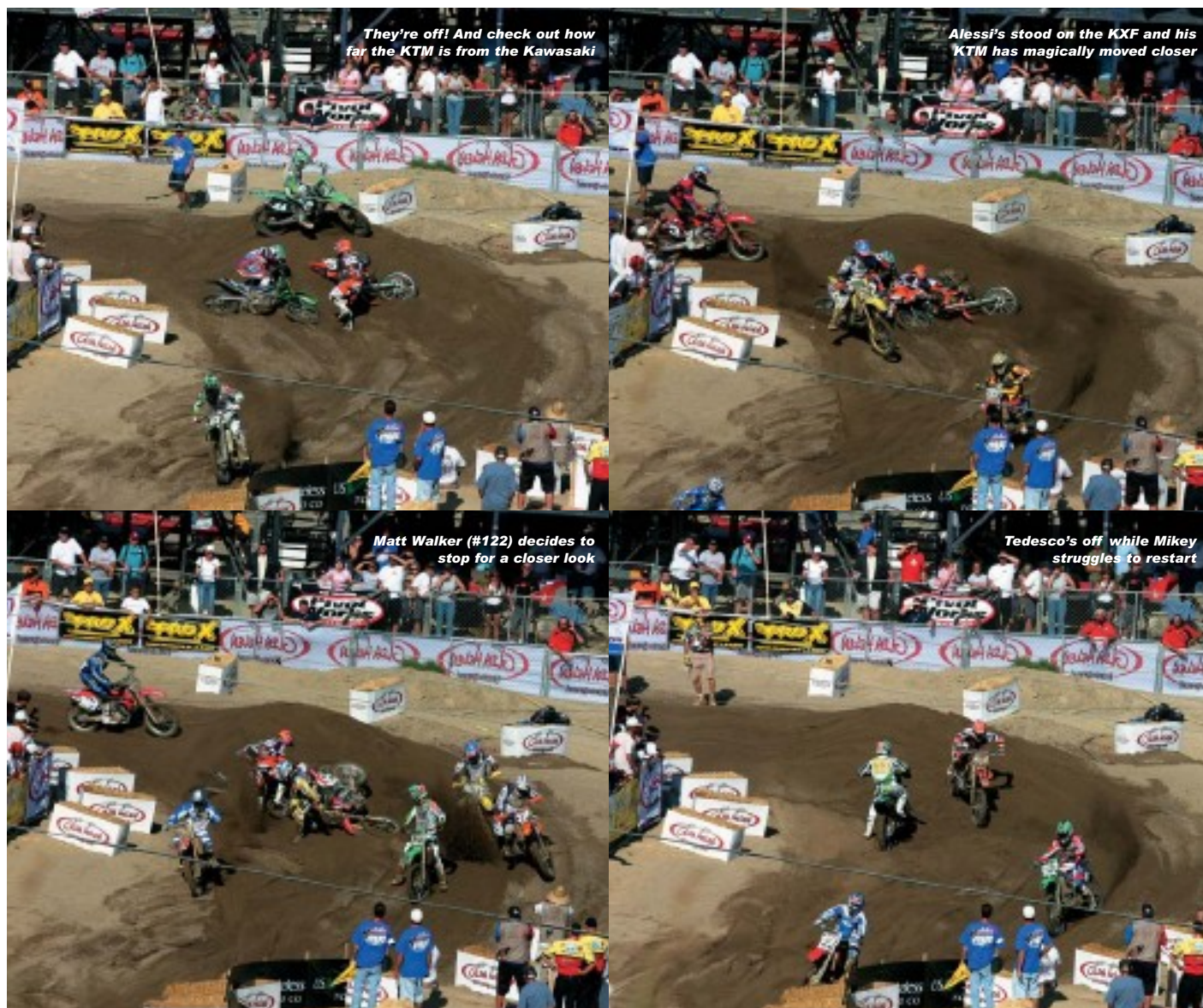
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They're off! And check out how far the KTM is from the Kawasaki

Alessi's stood on the KXF and his KTM has magically moved closer

Matt Walker (#122) decides to stop for a closer look

Tedesco's off while Mikey struggles to restart

MESSY ALESSI!

Photos by Kevin Healy

Mikey on a mission...

Wherever Mikey Alessi goes, controversy is never far behind! After a hard-fought season Stateside the super-fast teenager went into the final moto of the AMA 125cc National series needing a win to be in with a chance of taking the title.

But even if Mikey took the flag, all series leader Ivan Tedesco needed was a fifth place to secure the crown. So the scene was set for a pretty dramatic showdown – but as the gate dropped little did anyone know just how dramatic the race would be.

On the opening lap Tedesco got his nose in

front, Alessi failed to scrub off enough speed for a right-hander and t-boned the Pro Circuit Kawasaki man. As Tedesco went to pick up his still-running 250F Alessi – whose KTM had stalled – then appeared to reach for the PC machine's kill button and even did a jig on Tedesco's front wheel.

So entertaining was the scene that another Pro Circuit rider, Matt Walker, actually span his bike round so he could take a closer look.

The end result? Hot Sauce didn't make top five but he still took the title as Mikey finished well behind him.

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**Cover: Ben Townley
signs off after five
years in Europe at
Desertmartin**

**(Sutty)
Contents main image:
New British MX2 champ
Carl Nunn on GP duty
in Ireland
(Sutty)**



ONE GOOD TURN...

BACK IN May we flew out to Iceland to race the Transatlantic Challenge and we smuggled our mate Laura Ward across where Team Nitro Kawasaki kindly provided a suitable steed.

Well, one good turn deserves another and when team manager Sigurjon Einarsson asked if we could help with bikes for three Icelandic females we were up to the job!

One email to Team Green's Steve Guttridge later and we were put in touch with Alex Brawn who hooked us up with a KX85 and KX125. Cheers Alex!

On the day the Icelandic threesome did pretty well for their first races abroad – SW85cc pilot Karen Arnardottir came home 18th, Senior rider Anita Hauksdottir got 16th and Theodora Heimisdottir took second in the VMX class.

At this point it's probably a good time to thank Marshfield's MotoXtreme who were going to help us out with a KX125 until Kawasaki UK weighed in with a better offer!

**Ward chases down
Wakely at Culham**



LADY KILLERS!

UK Girls National goes off at Culham

Photos by Monsterjockey.com

BRITAIN'S FASTEST females – plus a few foreign imports – bash 'bars at Culham at the 12th running of the UK Girls National.

The big winner out of the 170-odd entries is Kelly Ward who goes 1-1-1 to top the premier AMX class from Katie Wakely and Danish visitor June Skytte. The other adult class – VMX – goes to Sarah Williams who records a maximum ahead of Icelandic champ Theodora Heimisdottir while Elien De Winter makes the journey from Belgium worthwhile with a maximum in the Senior group.

Sarah Symons' consistency in the BW85cc class is good enough to earn her the overall verdict and Amie Goodlad goes 2-1-3 to take the SW85cc class. Chelsea Gowland picks up the Junior title with a maximum from Kayleigh Durston who notches up three second places and the final maximum of the day comes from Auto hotshot Lauren Collingwood.



results

PRO CLASS

1	Ryan Voase	(Kawasaki)	15 laps
2	Paul Whibley	(Gas Gas)	15 laps
3	Jason Thomas	(Honda)	15 laps
4	Si Wakely	(Honda)	15 laps
5	Richard Hay	(Yamaha)	15 laps
6	Chris Hockey	(Husqvarna)	14 laps
7	Darren Wheeler	(Yamaha)	14 laps
8	Jack Twentyman	(Honda)	14 laps
9	Mark Jackson	(KTM)	13 laps
10	Matt Ridgeway	(KTM)	11 laps

HEAD TO HEAD!

Ryan Voase wins at Culham and takes the title

Voasey's the man (just) at the final round of the UKXC race series where he beats off Paul Whibley to become the '05 Pro champion

AFTER CRASHING out at the fourth round of the UKXC series in spectacular style, Team Green Kawasaki LPE rider Ryan Voase claims an important win at the final round of the series when he beats Gas Gas UK's Paul Whibley by just five seconds.

Seemingly glued together for the entire race, the pair swap the lead on numerous occasions with neither rider able to break clear of the other. Both need to top the race to win the championship and that leads to the pair

providing the best racing of the series.

"We both knew that we had to beat each other to win the championship," explains Voase. "After the last round of the series I decided to change my strategy and although I got the holeshot I decided to follow Paul early on. It turned out to be a great race and I'm made up to have won the championship."

With Whibley leading for much of the first half of the race, Voase gets his Kawasaki refuelled in double quick time to emerge from the pits a fraction ahead of his Gas Gas-mounted rival. The pair circulate just seconds apart with Whibley again hitting the front before falling.

"I made a small mistake and fell which meant that Ryan opened up a bit of a gap on me," says Whibs. "I caught him up again pretty quickly but I just couldn't close the last five-second gap. I was starting to feel tired near

the end of the race from having had flu."

At the flag and after nearly three hours of bar-to-bar racing Voasey claims his second win of the series to wrap up the '05 Pro class title.

Finishing third on the day and equalling his result at round four of the series is Jason Thomas. Within striking distance of the leading duo during the opening laps of the race, the Honda rider tangles with lappers and loses sight of the leaders midway through the race but still manages to claim a fine third.

Competing on a 250cc two-stroke for the first time, Si Wakely shows good pace early in the race before dropping back during the later stages to finish fourth. Next up are the four-strokes of Yamaha's Richard Hay and Husqvarna's Chris Hockey while Darren Wheeler, Jack Twentyman, Mark Jackson and Matt Ridgeway round out the top 10.

SUPERCLASH!

It's not just the riders who'll be going head-to-head during this winter's supercross shenanigans

IT LOOKS like we're all set for a winter of discontent as three separate supercross promoters have all managed to clash dates with one another, robbing potential fans and riders from attending a full sweep of exciting indoor events.

The British supercross season starts at Sheffield on October 22 with a Future West-promoted event that will hopefully see the American Alessi brothers taking on all-comers – including reigning Future West champions Carl Nunn and Jordan Rose – in the Hallam FM arena.

The next indoor date on the diary sees the first unfortunate clash of the year. November 26 has round one of the RHL Activities ACU-affiliated BSX series at Birmingham's NEC going up against one of last year's finest two-dayers – the Belfast SX open which actually kicks off the night before on the 25th.

International superstars Tyla Rattray, Carl Nunn, Billy MacKenzie, Mike Brown and Marc

De Reuver will go up against the hometown heroes Gordon Crockard and Martin Barr in a two-evening extravaganza in the Odyssey Arena. The show will also feature three back-flipping freestylers and enough pyrotechnics to blow the roof clean off!

Round two of the three-venue BSX championship goes off a weekend later – December 3 – in Newcastle. This event clashes with round two of the Future West series at Cardiff's Millennium Stadium which is also billed as the Youth World Supercross Championships.

The third and final round of the BSX series then heads south to London's Excel Arena. With the official British pro, amateur and youth titles on the line you can be sure the RHL-promoted championship – that runs for three weeks on the trot – will be a closely fought affair that keeps everyone on the edge of their seats.

BSX promoter Gareth Hockey remains upbeat despite the clashes and is firmly focussed on making his series the best it can be. "Having been granted the rights to promote the ACU British Supercross Championship for three years we're determined to secure quality venues and ensure a good coverage throughout the country. I believe with the three venues we have we've met this criteria. I'm particularly delighted to have secured London Excel which is major stepping stone to developing supercross in this country."



Diary dates...

BSX

Round 1	Birmingham NEC	November 26
Round 2	Newcastle Metro Arena	December 3
Round 3	London Excel Arena	December 10

www.britsxc.com

FWSX

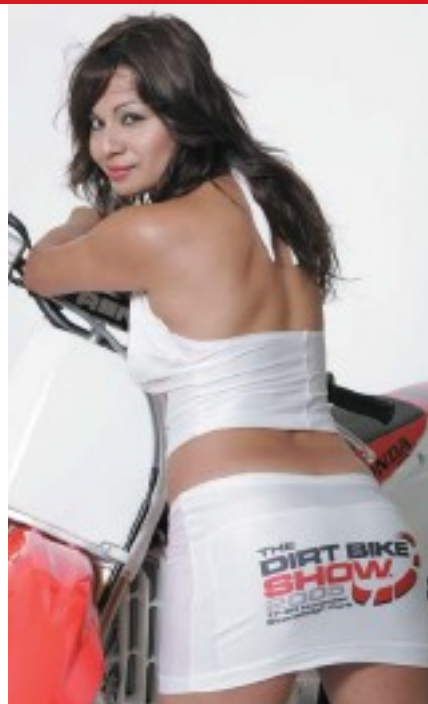
Round 1	Sheffield Hallam FM Arena	October 22
Round 2	Cardiff Millennium Stadium	December 3
Round 3/4	Cardiff Millennium Stadium	January 13/14

www.fwsx.com

BELFAST SUPERCROSS

Belfast Odyssey Arena	November 25/26
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www.belfastsupercross.com



DIRT BIKE DATE!

Hot models on show at Stoneleigh

MMMMM, KIRA... We can see a couple of good reasons right here to make sure we drag our sorry arses to the Dirt Bike Show but, trust us, there are lots more hot models on display at Stoneleigh Park from November 17-20.

If your taste leans towards tasty Italians then two of the show-stoppers have got to be Aprilia's V-twin MX and SM machines. And you can also file Husqvarna's SM610 SM beast under 'molto bello' (very beautiful in Italian according to freetranslation.com).

And the Italian presence isn't just limited to race machines – the full range of Beta trials bikes will be on display as well.

The Japanese Big Four are regulars at the show so visitors will be able to feast their eyes on some hardcore hardware from the Land of the Rising Sun. Choose from the twin-pipe CRF250 Honda, Kawasaki's alu-framed

four-bangers, Yamaha's '06 offerings and Suzuki's RM-Z450 that has swept all before it in the hands of Ricky Carmichael.

As well as the new bikes there will also be a wide range of clothing and accessories from the likes of Fro Systems, Alpinestars, Talon, No Fear, Wulfsport and 661 plus the UK debut of the RC-approved Berik MX boot.

Add to this over 50 retail stands, trials trick-riding displays, mini-bike madness with Glamorous Gary Taylor and, mmmmm, dancing girls on the **dbf** stage and you've got all the ingredients for a cracking day out.

Tickets cost £13.50 for adults and £7.50 for youths and senior citizens while nippers under six get in free with an adult. Family tickets – covering two adults and two children – weigh in at £37.50 and you can save up to 10 per cent on admission by booking in advance.

For more info check out the website at www.dirtbikeshow.co.uk or call 0870 143 2208.

AMCA UPDATE

HEREFORD MXC stage a thrilling round five of the AMCA championships at their new Waterstone circuit.

In the 125cc class Jamie Powell, Brad O'Leary and Rick Du-Feu all win one moto each and with just two rounds remaining Du-Feu leads O'Leary by a slender eight points. IMBA European championship riders Lee Dunham and James Lane also score good points with Lee managing sixth overall despite having his race bike stolen two days earlier.

In the Open class David Thomson holeshots all three motos but is forced to settle for third as Simon Lane notches up a 1-1-1 card. Only five weeks after breaking his hand, Elliot Barrs blasts his 250cc two-stroke Yamaha to a great second overall. There are also strong performances on the day from fellow two-stroke riders Clinton Barrs, Nicholas Batcock, Matthew Lee, Danny Blakeley and Matt Ryder.

With series leader Aaron Crowder suffering a moto two DNF after injuring his leg, Lane has now turned a five-point deficit into a 30-point advantage at the top of the championship table.



Brad O'Leary leads Rick Du-Feu

© Mike Wood



WHEN I first overheard someone mention that there was going to be freestyle motocross at the Winter X Games I thought they must have got hold of the wrong end of the exhaust pipe.

I mean, FMX in the snow and ice? I've been around long enough now to understand that even the lightest dusting of snow can bring our green island to a complete standstill. Thankfully, the X Games takes place in America because if it were round my way the council would have the gritters out and you wouldn't get the chance to see Brian Deegan attempting 360° back-flips or Jeff 'Ox' Kargola's no-footed back-flip to one-hander lander. Then, of course, I wouldn't have a series of programmes to write about either – madness!

Anyway, check out the Winter X Games on Extreme from October 28 at 9pm or double click your mouse on www.extreme.com for full listings.



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SAND SURFER!

Steve Ramon gets majorly out of shape on the factory four-fiddy at Desertmartin – and, yes, he saved it!

Photo by Toby Fuller

BLUE TWO! UK EXCLUSIVE!

Stefan Everts' and Antonio Cairoli's world championship winning Yamaha four-strokes ridden and rated





next MONTH

PASCAL LEURET

The super-fast Frenchman
who's heading our way!

Plus... '06 Suzukis and Gassers on
test, Brit MX champs sign off and
Brit SX champs kick off



ON SALE

November 11

+SPECTRUM JERSEY: £35



+QUARTZ GLOVE: £21

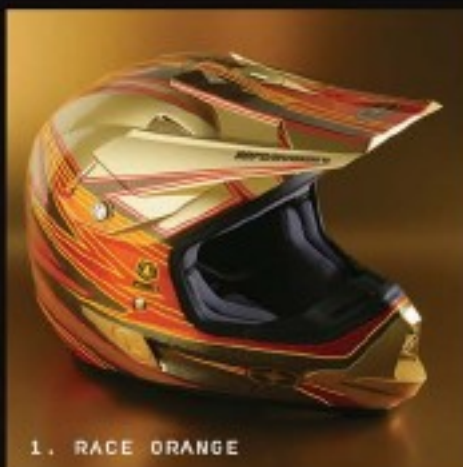
+SPECTRUM PANT: £69.99



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"As soon as I got back to England I went to see a doctor so he could have another look at my hand and see what damage had been done and he confirmed that nothing was rebroken but it needed time to heal - time which I didn't have"

Pain again!

Hurting his hand again isn't the start to the month Stevie was hoping for but there's still the Dutch title up for grabs

HI GUYS! This month started off not so well for me as I re-injured my hand at the Dutch GP in Lierop. It happened in the second practice on Saturday. I landed heavily from one of the jumps and straight away I knew from the pain I'd be unable to ride. That was the end of my weekend.

As soon as I got back to England I went to see a doctor so he could have another look at my hand and see what damage had been done. He confirmed that nothing was rebroken but it needed time to heal - time which I didn't have.

Later that week I flew to Germany to see another doctor for a second opinion but again I was told to rest it or it would not heal. It was then decided I would not go to the last GP in Ireland and instead I'd rest my hand for the last round of the Dutch championship which I'm leading.

I've struggled to sit at home watching all the other guys do well but sometimes you have to allow your injuries to heal 100 per cent or they could keep coming back for years to come. So with a bit of free time I took advantage of some VIP tickets from my sponsors Oakley to go and spend a day with the Red Bull F1 team on one of their test sessions at Silverstone.

I'd never seen a F1 car and up close it was pretty impressive. The noise alone made the hairs on the back of my neck stand up on end. After an hour I had to ask a guy who worked there for some ear plugs as all the noise was giving me a headache.

It was a great day out and I was very impressed with all the hospitality and race trucks. You can tell money is no object in that sport, however, in my eyes nothing will ever compare to motocross - the excitement is priceless.

While the Irish GP was on I travelled up to Scotland to visit my family and pester my brother. I had a really relaxing weekend eating and shopping with the missus but the best bit was clay pigeon shooting - it was great fun even if my brother did kick my ass!

I came back from Scotland to have a week training which consisted of swimming, running and cycling. Then I had to get ready to drive to Holland in the camper to do some testing in the Dutch sand. I'm also in Holland to do some testing on the 450 for next year.

I've now ridden the 450 a few times and I'm feeling very confident on it as I think my riding style suits having the extra power. It was purely my decision to move up to MX1. I'm really looking forward to the new challenge and there's the possibility I'll be back racing the British championship next year as well.

In a couple of week's time I'm going with the team to Japan for some testing with next year's bikes and I'm also going to compete in the last Japanese championship race at Sugo. It will be good for me to get to race on the 450 to see how I compare to the other riders before going into the winter.

It looks like there's going to be some good competition out there including Stefan Everts, Antonio Cairoli, Tanel



Leok and the Japanese aren't slow on their home soil either. I'm really excited to see how I will get on and definitely can't wait to get on my new bike and find out how I shape up against such strong opposition.

My hand is not giving me any problems and the rest has worked wonders. I can now start to focus on my racing again without any pain.

This year has not been that great for me, we've had a lot of ups and downs and for any sportsman their worst fear has to be injury. Health levels have to be at 100 per cent all season to get good results. I'm now fully focussed and very determined to win the Dutch championship which takes place at Mill.

That's all my gossip for this month. Hopefully I'll have good news for you next month from my trip to Japan. At least my diet will be good - rice, rice and more rice!

Good luck at the races and I'll hopefully see you soon...

Words by Stephen Sword Photo by Sutti



SWORD

Stevie
#1

Unfair advantage?

Well, you can see the competition's point of view

It's going to become a familiar sight to Honda's rivals in next year's MX2 championships around the world - the beautiful back end of the all-new, dual-exhaust 2006 Honda CRF250R. But it's not just the back end that's been improved. The new exhaust system centralises mass and contributes

to a sharper power delivery and more responsive handling. And, with more power and low-end torque, the Unicam four-stroke engine thumps the CRF250R out of corners so strongly that, if you're not on one next year, that view below may just get smaller and smaller.

Honda Contact Centre 0845 200 8000
www.honda.co.uk



"The Desertmartin track looked superb, the event went extremely well and the key people involved should be very proud of themselves for putting the politics aside and making the event happen. May it continue for many a year..."

Warm welcome!

After almost two months on the road Gordy gets to spend time in Ireland – and what a greeting he arrives home to...



WHATTABOUT ye? If reading that opening question totally confuses you then you're well within your rights as I'm sure the majority of the Desertmartin GP paddock were equally baffled. Not because the Irish can be confusing or anything obvious like that but more because 'whatta bout ye' is the most common way of saying 'hello' when meeting other folk. Foreign mechanics and riders must have been, well, lost on more than one occasion I reckon.

On the other hand, if you read my opening question and clearly understood it – but were still left thinking that I'm a complete balloon – then you should probably forget about reading any further down this page as I think most of what I write will only strengthen your belief!

Only kidding, read on please...

I threw myself in at the deep end and contested the Irish round of the World Supermoto Championship at Bishopscourt – without even practising once I may add. Practice and qualifying was on Friday and it must have been the wettest and windiest rotter of a day ever.

The clerk of the course made a decision to cut out the off-road section and save it for race day so that meant I was on Tarmac for the entire lap. Well, I was supposed to be but I must confess to having a few excursions on to the grass due to running out of road when I got my braking a bit wrong.

Race day was dry and the off-road section was in so I was much further up the leaderboard and enjoying this way more. Two 16th place results were a reward for my efforts but then I had another race to enter – a race down the motorway to make the flight from Dublin to England before

driving up to Whitby for the British MX champs.

The weather had been pretty cruel to the Whitby club in the lead up to Sunday's race. The track had been presented very well and I think it would have been fantastic without the rain. It's on the 2006 calendar and I'm glad as I reckon it deserves it – and the club deserve a big pat on the back for their extra effort with helping everyone in and out of the paddock.

After the race I drove the camper to Stranraer and caught the midnight ferry. It docked in Belfast at 3am and I steered towards home. Now, I'd not been home for nearly two months – apart from the two days at the supermoto – and I was looking forward to getting into regular life again.

Little did I know there were problems in Belfast and lots of rioting and vehicles burning on the night I got off the boat. I soon found out as I turned down a road which is on the route home and I was met with a burning bus blocking the way! Welcome home – whatta bout ye!

I quickly selected reverse gear and got out of there, choosing another direction to get home safely. Thankfully, the trouble stopped after a few days and the world motocross travelling community arrived on the shores of Belfast and travelled up the road to Desertmartin without any factory race trucks getting hijacked.

The track looked superb and the event went extremely well and the key people involved should be very proud of themselves for putting the politics aside and making the event happen. May it continue for many a year.

The day after the GP I met with a few friends for a couple of hours of wake-boarding and messing around on the water. It was a good craic and if I had more spare time to do this type of thing I certainly would. The climate is not great for watersports over here but it sure teaches you not to fall in to often.

I represented Team Ireland for the MXdN which France hosted. My fellow team-mates were Philip McCullough on his 250F KTM and Martin Barr on his 450 Bike-it Yamaha. Stephen Russell was our team manager and we were well supported by two full coachloads of Irish MX fans to urge us on around the Erne circuit.

This was my ninth year on the team in a row and I was bitterly disappointed not to make the final race. It's the first time ever I failed to be in the main race and the only good thing about that was getting to spectate the big races. Carmichael is my hero and my hat goes off to Townley for matching his pace in the last race of the day.

Matt Bates is running his annual Belfast Supercross on November 25/26 and I attended the press launch for that recently. He's having a minibike race with a few celebrities contesting it so I'm sure that will be mayhem and well hyped up. There'll be freestyle with back-flips as well which will bring the house down no doubt.

I'm hoping to talk Jeremy McWilliams into doing a back-flip on the night – he'd probably suggest doing it on his BSB Fireblade he's that game.

Best of luck to you all whatever you might be attempting to do and cheers for persisting with my sketchy collection of words and thoughts!

Words by Gordon Crockard Photo by Suttty



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"After some rapid pit stops I was in the lead and with plenty of support managed to pull off one of my biggest victories to date - seeing all the people cheering me on made me feel proud to be a racer"

Double Bonus!

Paul podiums at the ISDE and follows it up with a win at Weston - not a bad month by anyone's standards...

WHAT A month! I've managed to win Weston and I got back on the two-stroke for the six days and podiumed the E2 class.

But before I start banging on about my incredible form, first of all I have to congratulate the big man David Knight on winning the ISDE outright - a great achievement. And also a big well done to all the other members of our team who put in great performances.

While on the subject of the ISDE I must say it was probably one of the best ones I've ever done - no road work, all off-road and great special tests. The only downside was it didn't rain enough! After starting off the week in my usual way, slow but sure, I managed to run about seventh in class.

One of my big problems was that I was the first E2 rider on all of the tests and ended up grass-cutting the way for the rest of the class. But that all changed on day five when the heavens opened and we had ourselves a mud race.

Although it was only for one day, it gave me a great boost to beat the likes of Aro and Merriman by one minute over only four special tests. This put me right back up into the top of the class and helped me get another podium finish and gold medal.

As most people are aware, at the end of the six days they have the usual motocross race - something that every rider looks forward to racing. For myself it's always a buzz being on the startline with all the other top riders trying to show everyone who's the boss! Anyway, after holeshotting the race and leading for a couple of laps the rear brake went off and my tongue started wagging and I ended up finishing third - a very respectable result as this meant I was fourth in the whole event.

All-in-all a great event, great team spirit and well done to all the helpers!

Next stop was Culham Fast Eddy where I decided to have a weekend off to let the old bones heal themselves from the ISDE. With me not riding I let Simon Wakely loose on my 250 two-stroke to see how he would cope against the big boys. After running with the lads for nearly half the race a few small problems dropped him back to finish fourth but I was more than happy with the kid's result - to run the pace that Whibs and Voase were running was impressive. So the event went down well with a longer course and no injuries - roll on next season!

Now something that has eluded me for my whole career is winning Weston Beach Race but I can now finally say I've achieved it with some serious help from the following people - Pete, Swiss and the Lings crew were without a doubt a big part of my victory and I have got to thank them for their support.

The race itself went pretty smooth and after an hour I was running in second, not too far behind Brad Anderson. After some rapid pit stops I was in the lead and with plenty of support managed to pull off one of my biggest victories



***"Well done kid!"
Paul gets a hug from
his dad Pete after
winning Weston***

to date. Seeing all the people cheering me on made me proud to be a racer so thanks to all those people out there and I will be back next year to try and win again.

I'm busy right now with my preparations for 2006. I've been working in the shop and getting a programme together which will see me full-time again on the two-fiddy two-stroke.

Okay, that's all for the moment - see you at the shows.

Words by Paul Edmondson Photo by Ray Chuss

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FAST EDDY



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"The emotion that comes with a GP was clearly evident as the crowd held their breath while Ballymena's Phil McCullough rode the lap of his life during qualification for the MX2"



Just Deserts!

The success of the GP of Ireland's a fitting reward for the vision and effort of the team behind it

THE GRAND Prix of Ireland was 100 per cent a success story, one that all concerned can be proud of and a solid platform from which motocross in Ireland can reach out into mainstream sport.

The high cost of promoting a GP in Ireland was always going to be a gamble but Damian Fleming and his team at Schism embraced the new challenge. Joe McAleese and his crew worked flat-out and at one point Joe actually took the time to escort yours truly through the tight security into the GP paddock – thanks Joe!

I for one was both surprised and delighted at the vast crowd that appeared, even when the locals knew that the Crock Star would not be in the frame given his current form. So, in short, well done Schism and well done the Cookstown Club...

The emotion that comes with a GP was clearly evident as the crowd held their breath while Ballymena's Phil McCullough rode the lap of his life during qualification for the MX2. Some one-and-a-half seconds off qualification, McC pulled out all the stops – qualify or crash trying seemed to be the order of the day. And qualify he did!

In what is the most competitive class in the GPs, finishing 23-22 is not such a bad result and McC kept his head down and battled on with the kind of gritty determination that's become his trademark.

Martin Barr was another Irishman who rode with great pride and the youngster showed real promise. Two scoring rides in his home GP will surely give Martin that boost needed to keep him focused on the future.

"Steve Dixon and the team have been really good to me and I hope that I can continue to repay them with improved results," says Martin who feels that the Dixon Camp is an extension of his family.

In probably his last GP for Dixon Yamaha, Gordon Crockard was as disappointed as his fans – a single point was his reward from a weekend which just about sums up 2005 for the Newtownards man. Rumour of machine problems echoed through the paddock, while on the track GC struggled to a 20/DNF card.

For sure the past needs to be left behind if Gordon is to rekindle his once bright flame of success at GP level. Talent alone is not enough to make it in this sport – determination, preparation, good equipment and fitness are all part of the recipe required. And all of these are redundant without confidence and luck.

Let's not forget that Gordon is still the biggest single talent ever to come out of Ireland and for 2006 the only way is up.

Onto the des Nations. The disappointment of not qualifying for the main event was quickly reversed as GC, Martin Barr and McC went on to narrowly miss out on the overall win against Slovenia in the B Final on the spectacular hillside circuit.

Congratulations to all our 2005 champions – Martin Barr, Robert Hamilton, Mike Sinton and Brian Steele. And while I'm on the subject, Ulster/Irish Semi Expert champ Jonathan Eadie had a cracking season and is looking



Big Phil McC shows a lot of heart at the Desert

forward to mixing it up with the big boys in 2006.

James Kennedy won Grade C MX2 while David Hobson took the Open class by a mere two points from Lloyd Scates who managed six moto wins. Another rider worthy of a mention is young David Williamson who rode well all season, winning his first Irish title. David wrapped up the Irish Grade C class in Ferns – and the party afterwards caused a few sore heads.

We're now into the crazy season. Oh yes, musical saddles are in full swing and #1 on the rumour mill is the Crock Star – where does he go for '06? Three seasons in the GP wilderness due to a catalogue of injuries will restrict the talented Irishman's opportunities but Gordon is determined to make 2006 his comeback year.

TAS Suzuki, while keeping their cards close to their chest, have made no secret of the fact that Adam Lyons has set his sights on supermoto. "I need a knew challenge and I believe that supermoto is the way forward," says the ever-confident Adam.

Ex Ulster MX1 champion Tommy Merton will again run under the Williamson Construction banner next year. Riding the all-new Yamaha 450, Tommy will concentrate on the Irish/Ulster MX1 championships.

Team GOMX365 have announced a three-man adult team for 2006 – Irish MX1 champion Mike Sinton, Ulster MX2 champion Robert Hamilton and teenager Luke Wilde.

International supercross returns to the Belfast Odyssey on November 24/25 as Events 22 stage their annual world class SX. Last year's winner Jean-Sebastien Roy will be joined by Mike Brown, Tyla Rattray, Billy Mac and Marc De Reuver who will battle local heroes Crockard, Lyons, McC, Hamilton and Barr.

The usual bikes and babes will be on the menu, now add a celebrity Mini Bike GP and Ireland's first ever back-flip and what have you got – a not-to-be-missed, sell-out show!

See you at the Odyssey!

Words by Stevie Mills Photo by Suttly

Stevie

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GOT SOMETHING TO SAY? Well here's where you should be saying it...

Classy Cairoli

I'm writing to thank you for the tickets I won for the Isle of Wight GP. It was a brilliant weekend both with the weather and the racing which was made even more special by Billy Mac winning the first race. I've just returned from the des Nations and that was just the same – scorching hot weather and with excellent racing.

I'd also like to say what a great ambassador Antonio Cairoli is for the sport. When he broke down in the Isle of Wight he calmly pushed his bike off the track and proceeded to wait at the side and cheer other riders on. He didn't leave the bike on the track and march off in a strop as I've seen some older riders do. Children follow by example and when they see riders like Cairoli acting with such respect they'll surely do the same.

On the Sunday evening in France we were out having a meal when Cairoli walked past the restaurant. He saw the children were excited to see him and said hello before going into a restaurant with his crew. The children couldn't bide themselves and followed him in asking for autographs which he was only too happy to sign.

Not all riders would be so accommodating after racing all weekend but this young man really knows how to treat his fans. When the children got home they talked more about Cairoli than they did anyone else, even Carmichael. As parents we're very impressed by Antonio's show of maturity and we hope more riders follow his example.

Malcolm, via email

Can't argue with that Malcolm – Cairoli's one of the nicest guys on the GP circuit. He's also pretty fast too...

Xris Xross

My name is Xris and I'm a foreign student from Greece. I've been studying Civil Engineering in South Wales for the last three

years. Last year I sold my much loved WR I owned back in Greece and purchased a second hand Honda CR250 so I could ride once a week on some of the beautiful tracks you have here in Britain.

I really can't say I'm an ordinary student because I don't do all that stuff students do – except for the studying. Instead I spend all my money on my bike instead of going out but that's the thing that makes me happy.

I'm a great fan of your mag and just wanted to say that you all do a great job!

This is going to be my last year in Britain and once I return to Greece I'm going to help my brother build a motocross practice track in Athens. I was wondering if you know where I can get some info about building tracks so I can start designing.

Xristos, South Wales

It's probably worth checking out www.dirtwurx.com. Dirtwurx are the guys responsible for building the majority of the US supercross tracks and have a really informative web page with plenty of facts and tips on there. Good luck!

Hand help

Every time I go riding after about half-an-hour my hands get stuck shut in the grip position and I have to stop and prise them open which is very painful – it really affects my speed and generally does my nut in. I thought it would go after lots of riding but it hasn't, I don't think it's arthritis because I'm only 21. Do you know anyone who has this problem and are there any remedies for it? Will I have to have hand transplants?

One last thing, I crash all the time – any remedies for that? A free day at Swordy's school maybe!

Matt, via email

Sutty's had that problem in his time and he always put it down to holding on way too tight

Gasser info



I've just read a letter that Joe from Ireland wrote regarding the potential purchase of a Gas Gas motocross bike.

I'm 44 and I purchased a 250 Gas Gas while living in the Middle East. The MX version has a six-speed box and no counter-shaft like on the enduro version which makes the engine much punchier.

On my return to the UK I rejettied for unleaded fuel and fitted an FMF Gnarly system. This made the bike light up but the silencer was fitted with a spark arrestor for USA green regs, this I removed which improved the initial acceleration off the bottom.

The Gasser comes with Ohlins suspension and Excel rims as standard. It's light and handles very much like a KX and has plenty of power. I personally think the bike is ideal for the mature rider and the UK agent provides a mail order service for spares etc and they're more than willing to discuss problems over the phone.

I raced this bike in the 2001 Weston Beach Race and actually finished. I just thought these comments might be useful for Joe.

Ian, Bristol

PS The mag is brilliant but could do with more bike tech stuff such as simple tuning for the amateur.

Thanks for clearing that up for us – we're sure Joe and any other potential Gas Gas buyers will be most grateful. Look out for a test on the enduro models next month.

*For anyone wanting to grab a Gasser give the UK importers a call on **01298 766813** or email bossman John Shirt Jnr at mail@gasgasuk.com*

to the bars – so try and relax a bit! As for crashing too much don't worry about it, at least it proves you're trying!

Kiwi question

I've been reading your magazine for over 10 years down here in New Zealand but after buying **dbt** from the same newsagent it's disappeared from the shelves and the shop's suppliers claim it's not being distributed here.

Can you let me know if it's still distributed in NZ? And if so by whom? My newsagent has had no help or luck with her enquiries. The last issue I received was the May '05 edition. Is it possible to get back issues?

Dave, via email

*There's good news and bad news mate! At present **dbt** is only being distributed in Britain (and some parts of Ireland) but we'll send it anywhere on earth for subscribers and that includes back issues too! Call Anne on **+44 (0)1524 834030** to place your order now!*



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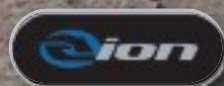
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INNOVATION SPORTS MORPH KNEE BRACE

Not everyone needs – or even wants – to wear knee braces but for those who do (but maybe don't want to spend a fricken' fortune on custom-made items) there's good news as joint injury prevention and protection specialists Innovation Sports have released these sub-£600 Morphs.

The hand-crafted carbon fibre/epoxy frames are rivetted top and bottom to the all-new and patented TCT (Transforming Cuff Technology) cuffs. These cuffs are remarkably similar to the ones found on the very popular Asterisk braces and are easily adjustable – with an Allen key – to help ensure you find the best fit for your leg.

The 'Accutrac' four-bar linkage hinge is available in two styles – the standard hinge with adjustable limit extension (10°, 20°, 30° or 40°) and the ROM hinge which also allows you to limit the amount of flexion (by 45°, 60°, 75° or 90° degrees).

Personally, we prefer to leave the flexion limiter well alone but set the extension limit to 20°. The amount of available adjustment ensures different people with different knee problems will be able to find a set-up that suits their own personal needs.

Optionally available patella cups come complete with handy hinge covers that not only protect the braces themselves but also lessen the damage done to your pants and bike's panels. The close-fitting design of the braces also helps decrease the danger of snagging them.

Fitment is simple enough with adjustable pivoting straps doing the duties in this department. The straps on the Morphs are much narrower than on previous off-the-shelf CTI models which allows the straps to get a better grip against your leg and definitely helps solve the migration problem associated with some other brand knee braces.

Available in five different sizes from small to XXL, the Morphs are very effective braces at a very reasonable price. Perhaps the most important thing is that they feel comfortable and when used with a quality knee sock barely any chaffing is experienced – even in sandy or wet conditions.

Price: £595 a pair

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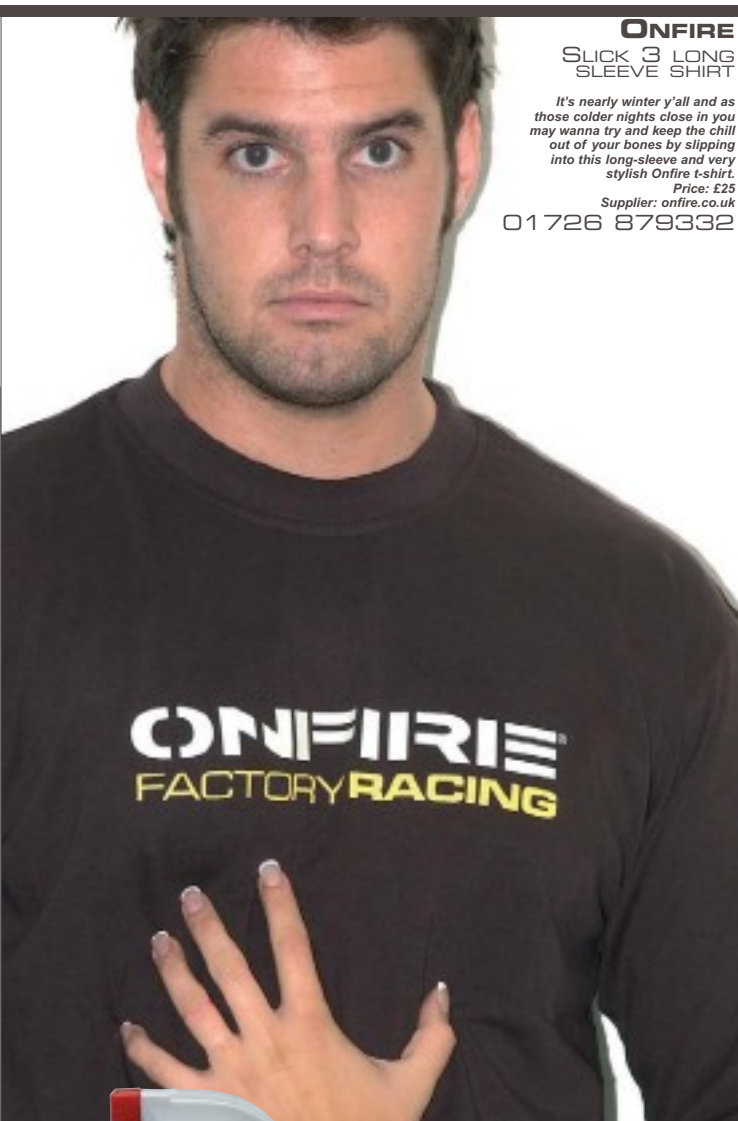
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VANS

TONY III SKATE SHOE

If there's one thing our new designer Marge loves then it's magazines – he's insatiable! Luckily though there's a newsagents right around the corner from dbr towers but since he's been working here he's worn out at least three sets of inferior footwear as he plods off to buy his daily fix of pure printed paper pleasure. He's got these Vans Tony IIIs now. We're not sure how long they'll last exactly but they sure do look a lot better than anything we've seen on his hooves before!

Price: £65
Supplier: vans.co.uk
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Pictured Rider: Kevin Windham

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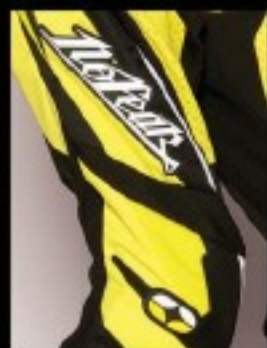
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BT celebrates his MX2 title in Ireland in '04...

BYE-BYE BEN!

As Ben Townley gets set to shake up the States, we pay tribute to the killer Kiwi who in just five seasons has made a permanent impression on GP motocross

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson



...and one year later in the Emerald Isle receives an emotional GP send off



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BEN TOWNLEY flew into Europe on a cold, damp day in the early spring of 2001 with a bag of clothes and a big heart. The 20-year-old Kiwi flew out of Europe three days after the 2005 Nations with a world title, 14 GP wins and the respect of the entire motocross GP world on the next stage of his adventure – to conquer America!

"It's pretty tough to be leaving after five years. It's just like when I left home to come in 2001 – this has been my home for five years, people have been good to me, I've built up relationships which are going to last forever and I've had a great time. But I have to move on and it was always my dream to go to the USA.

"I have the opportunity to go there with a great team and I can't turn it down. I made a decision that they were the best team to go with – I'll stick by that and I think it's going to be a good choice."

It's this refreshing openness, honesty and friendliness which have endeared BT to the motocross scene all over Europe and which will surely make him a firm favourite in the States too.

And if anyone needed proof of the impact "the little fat kid on the Suzuki who nobody knew but pulled good starts and went backwards down the pack" has made in his five seasons racing in Europe, then it was in the tribute that record champ Stefan Everts and Ben's other friends paid to him as they met him at the line of his final GP in Desertmartin to bid him farewell. It was a unique tribute in the history of the sport!

I never met Ben at his first GP. When he wasn't on track himself he was wandering the spectator banks of Bellpuig, awe-inspired at the world of GP motocross. But Justin Morris – his team-mate on the short-lived Phase team – and team manager Jochen Jasinski enthused over Ben. Neither had ever seen a kid with so much talent and commitment.

I finally tracked Ben down a couple of weeks later at Genk where he registered his first GP score with a 10th on race day and by late summer Tinus Nel had integrated him into the Vangani team alongside his protege Tyla Rattray.

World 80cc champ Tanel Leok completed the Brat Pack in 2002 but Ben was the unchallenged star in the ascendancy. For half the year he was a genuine title candidate before inexperience cost him. "Those races with Maschio were something special, like when I led a GP for the first time at Teutschenthal but I cocked it up. I was even in the championship race, just three points off the lead at one stage. The Vangani team must be one of the most amazing teams I will ever ride for."

Podiums in Holland, Italy and Bulgaria had already given Ben the taste for success and a maiden GP win came in Sweden as he hauled in and passed factory leader Steve Ramon – but it's not the race which lives in Ben's memory.

"I don't think it really sinks in until you're on the podium and there is complete silence except for your national anthem. You get to look out across the track and think how good the day was, everything that has gone into it to get there. You can just stand there for those few moments taking it all in and nobody can take it away from you."

As official KTM junior team, Vangani was the creche for the Champ team and BT moved to the factory squad the following year. But a badly set wrist from a US training crash saw Ben withdraw temporarily from the series after Valkenswaard. Even then his self-belief was overwhelming. "If I can't beat them, I'm wasting my time. I've got to get my wrist reset." He had just finished fourth to Ramon, Eggens and De Reuver in sand!

profile



With Vangani team-mates Tanel Leok and Tyla Rattray in '02



Meeting new boss Mitch Payton at Ernee



With Ma and Pa Townley in 2004



BT gets ahead of buddy Josh Coppins in South Africa



The MXdN was BT's last ride in Europe before he headed for the States



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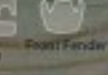


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By late summer Ben was back and within weeks was the only man to push the unbeatable Everts (don't forget, Stefan raced MX2 that year as well) and in 2004 came the victory roll which should have happened a year earlier. "The whole year was just great – winning the world title and 21 races – but I've had some great moments this year too.

"The victories this year have been even more exhilarating. In MX2 if you made the pass and were strong in the head, then you could do them over and I felt really confident every week. I still feel confident in MX1 but the rivals are just as confident as I am – you can't kill Stefan or Josh.

"When you make the pass, it's not that easy to run and hide. But that has been good for me. That was the challenge I wanted, to step up and race those guys and help me prepare for America."

And that first MX1 win at Bellpuig had a special poignance. "Back in 2001 it was my first GP, the first time I ever saw Everts and Smets and all those guys. I remember just sitting on the hillside, thinking 'wow'. And four years later I went there and beat them all. That was a magic moment."

Japan was tough. "I was right there, I'd hauled Stefan in and I was ready to do him. Even if it happened after I had passed him, it wouldn't have been so bad because at least I would have had the satisfaction of having proved that I would have had that one. But for the bike to break when it did, that was the toughest dnf I've ever had to deal with."

Still he bounced back. "Italy and France were just amazing. At that moment I was on top of the world, winning four motos in a row. And Sweden was another great day. I got beaten by Josh but that first moto was just unreal. And, even though I didn't win, I didn't care – we were both on the podium and Katherine Prumm was on the podium in the women's world cup. For New Zealand motocross that was just huge."

But France was probably the best Ben has ever ridden. "The first race was wicked. It took me a while to get to second from about eighth and I just started hunting Stefan down and finally made the pass. It was the first time in a GP where I was able to shut Stefan down, make the pass and get away. And I broke him at that point.

"But I'd have to say that second moto in France was almost near perfection. What I did in that moto was unreal. It was one of those races you wish could ride every time. I got the lead and I didn't look back once. There was one jump at the back of the track – a triple step-up – and nobody had jumped it all weekend but I had so much flow round the corner and up the hill that I jumped it in the race. It was one of those races where I could do nothing wrong.

"I still had the same confidence going to Sweden but I think everyone realised it was time to step it up. Josh and Stefan came back at the level I was at and it has been tough from then to the end of the season – the level has been so high and mistakes have been costly.

"I don't know if I was ever really in the title chase. In my mind I was but realistically I wasn't. But for sure I could have kept the pressure on more if I hadn't got hurt at Aichwald. It could happen anywhere but if I look back at my career most of my injuries have been at international races. Those races don't count for anything and I don't think I have the concentration there – at a GP I am 100 per cent focused but at an international it's more laid back and that's when you make mistakes. I've learnt from that."

And the GP on the Isle of Wight was another highlight of the year. "I won again but what made it special was to see Tyla come back

profile



With trusted technician Craig Behl



BT was a genuine contender in 2002 but lost out to Mickael Maschio



Injury prevented Townley from challenging for the title in '03



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like that too. He'd done a lot of training and it had been tough for him. We had been with him in the week – doing our cycling and gym work – but at the weekend he just had to sit home. For me to win and for him to win in separate classes and that at the same track where Josh and I had won and Tyla and I had had an amazing battle the year before. That was special.

"I think I've done well all year and it's been good experience but mistakes cost me. In my mind I wanted to race for the title but it didn't quite work out.

"But my respect to Stefan. I just couldn't believe how he pulled me back in the second race in Ireland. He must have found extra motivation or something. I think he probably thought that if I beat him in that race – and it's the last time we ever race a GP together – he'd never hear the end of it.

"But even he was absolutely done at the end of that race, he pushed so hard. We did our races opposite ways – I did mine at the beginning, he at the end. And in the middle was where it cost me.

"Perhaps I wasn't 100 per cent focused. It was my last race and when I got the holeshot I thought I was going to get away. I got such a big lead I thought the race was done and all of a sudden Stefan started to close me back down. I kept trying harder but he kept coming. I got beaten by the best rider in the world and I've got to learn from him."

Stefan had another reason to win that race – he wanted to be waiting for Ben at the line. "I had no idea they had anything planned. That was pretty cool. It was pretty amazing, gratifying to see how people feel about you. I try to treat people with respect and get the same back. My parents brought me up that way and it's important to them. I just act myself – I don't want to be anybody else and I've built up awesome friendships with so many people in the sport. For them to congratulate me like that was really nice."

So what does Ben take with him from five years GP racing? "Hard work, dedication, I've ridden in all types of terrain, I've learnt to ride mud, hard pack, sand – nothing is going to be new to me apart from supercross.

"And being down to earth. European people have their feet on the ground. Like there are times when they would cancel a race back home because it's too muddy but that never happens here. They just get on with it. I'll take all that with me to America. No matter what the situation, I'll just carry on.

"Wednesday I'm out of here. I already have appointments to meet my trainer [Ben will live in Florida and work with RC's trainer], to set up bank accounts, all that. Then I have 14 days of rest time in which I have to do some obligations like photo shoots and meeting everyone at Kawasaki and on the 25th of October I start my training.

"I've definitely set my goal for the Nationals and I have high ambitions. Nothing less than the title will do but in supercross I need to keep level-headed, make sure I put all the work in and once I've done that I should be at a level where I can run top five consistently. If I can do that, I'm going to be in the championship race anyway."

The whole of Europe is wishing Ben well and his performance at the Nations will already have sent a shudder down the spine of the opposition in the States.

And he'll be back in the UK next September for the Nations. When Mitch Payton was asked at the Ernee press conference if he would let Ben return next year the Pro Circuit boss never even got chance to reply as Ben interjected from the stage with a grin. "He can't stop me. I'm coming."



BT's GP career started in '01 on the short-lived Phase Suzuki team



The 2005 French GP was probably Ben's finest hour (so far)...

bt on the boys...

STEFAN EVERTS

"My relationship with Stefan has been a little bit different this year but since 2002 we have had a good relationship. You're not in this sport for long and I don't make a secret that I want to be the best I can and I'm not scared to ask for help. It hasn't hurt me so far. I learnt a lot from Stefan, from Joel, from Josh. Those guys have been a big influence on my career. "Some people say I've been hanging on but I've picked up a lot just watching Stefan on a bike. I used to run high gears too in MX2 but I can't do it in MX1, the bike's just too fast for me. There's just too much power in a 450, I can't do it. When you've hooked third gear and are opening it up and then they hook fourth, no way..."

JOSH COPPINS

"Josh has shown me how important hard work and commitment are. And a great friendship too. It goes beyond racing. A lot of people try to see the bad side of us racing each other but Josh and I are basically just friends. Josh has kept my feet on the ground, kept me on the right track and I can't thank him enough for being there for me all the time."

TYLA RATTRAY

"Actually, I HATE to admit it – put that in big letters – but for raw speed Tyla is probably faster. I'm a year older, just a little bit more experienced. In a couple of years we'll be on equal playing fields but at least I'll have one extra year in the States to get ready for him. I think we'll have a great time racing each other."

CRAIG BEHL

"Craig is really important for me. He's been with me through four-and-a-half years and knows me as well as I know myself. If I do need to say something, it's already done. You can't go to the line wondering if your bars are tight and with Craig it's always done."

...and the boys on bt!

STEFAN

"It has been a pleasure to meet Ben. If anyone has what it takes to succeed in America, then it is Ben."

JOSH

"As a person he's outgoing, easy to talk with, cheeky, cocky and he carries that over into his riding. When I was just into seniors back home in NZ he was in the juniors on 80s so we know each other from them. He used to camp in my village in the summer for some races and our parents became friends too.

"I can't think of anyone else I could be with all the time like Ben. We never had any problems and I think that must be pretty unique."

TYLA

"I think he's a hard worker, has a strong head and I think those things are going to help pull him through when he goes to America. We hit it off straight away right from the beginning when we met in 2001.

"We've always been pushing each other and he's helped me get better and better. When we go training together we're pushing to the limits. Until I met Ben I used to give up in times of adversity. But he taught me never to give up."

MITCH PAYTON

"I've only ever seen Ben ride once – that was two years ago when he came to ride a National for KTM – but he has proved that he has what it takes to win championships and his results this year confirm his talent.

"I have the greatest respect for Stefan and Mickael and if he can race and hold his own with them, then he must have the speed. He already has a good work ethic and he will be living and training in Florida with Ricky and Eldon. I am confident that he can not only win in motocross but also in supercross already next year."

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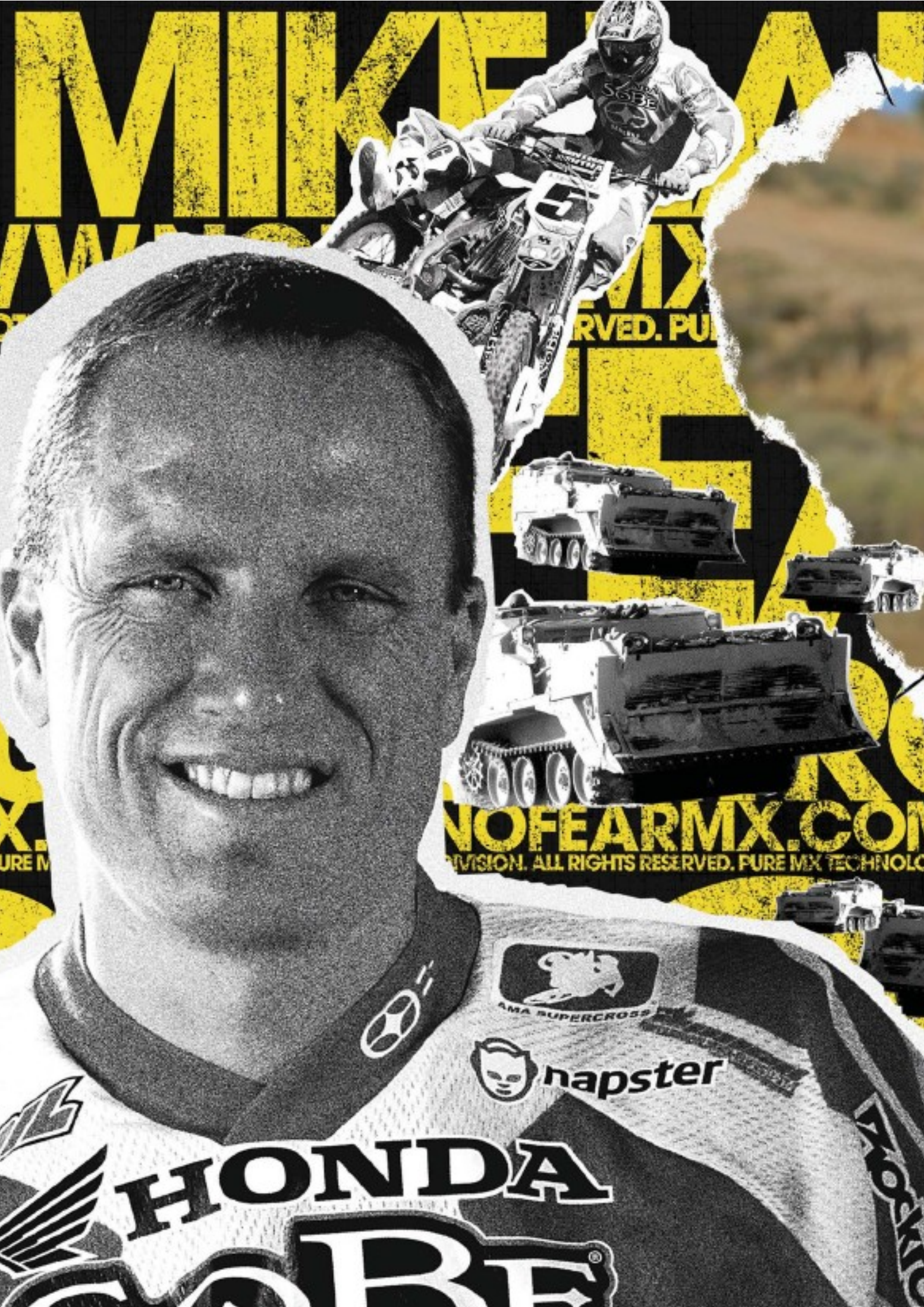
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Although it's been capped at 96db for '06 the new 250 motor feels stronger than this year's machine





DOUBLE BONUS!

An all-new KX450F plus a radically reworked KX250F – Kawasaki come out swinging for 2006 with a pair of heavy-hitting, super-sweet four-strokes...

Words by Tony Marshall Photos by redevye.uk.com

WE'VE BEEN waiting, we've been waiting...and then we've been waiting some more. Well, now the wait is finally over and Kawasaki have got their production 450cc four-stroke up and running and ready to rip up the track for 2006!

And as if bringing out an all-new machine wasn't a big enough challenge, the Kawasaki think tank's also been hard at work on their existing KX250F. For '06 the quarter-litre four-popper hasn't simply been refined, Kawasaki have poured plenty of TLC into the mix and come up with some pretty major mods.

Seeing as we've been waiting such a long time for the KX450F a little further delay won't

hurt anyone so our test kicks off with the 250cc four-stroke.

Kawasaki have got another year of development under their belts and they've made a lot of radical changes to their 250 four-stroke for 2006 – the most obvious one being the aluminium frame.

We saw the stir Kawasaki made when their alu-framed 250 four-stroke made its race debut at Namur this year. Well, now it's available to Joe Public – not just factory superstars like Stephen Sword!

Some manufacturers have struggled to get this right at their first attempt but the 250F

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The aluminium frame on both bikes makes for impeccable manners – on the ground and in the air



felt very balanced and gave a very positive feel from the aluminium chassis. Obviously, this isn't 100 per cent down to the frame – the Showa suspension has a big say in it as well – but if the chassis isn't right it tends to be very noticeable very quickly.

Personally, I feel that Kawasakis have always had forgiving handling and this hasn't changed a bit for '06. I spent most of the morning riding the 250 because I wanted to get a good feel for it – and I did straight away.

On the track through turns – high-speed and low-speed – the bike tracks really well. It's so stable and the front is very positive – it eats up braking bumps and never felt as though it wanted to tuck under or push away. The rear balances very well with the front and it coped with some hard landings.

Saying that, coming down one of the steepest hills on the gas I had a little bit of a problem with the front end feeling slightly unstable. But we played with the clickers and slowed the rebound which made a definite improvement.

My main dislike with the KXF is the seat foam. The bikes we tested had a couple of days

of work squeezed out of them prior to us riding them but the seat foam was so soft it felt like they'd already done a season. This isn't a big deal though – if all you have to worry about is an after-market seat foam you can't really complain too much.

The bars feel a little closer to the rider this year so you need to compensate by having them further forward in the clamps. This feels a little unusual – on 90 per cent of the bikes I ride the handlebars are in line with the forks but with the Kawasaki you have to run them a little past that point.

The 250 kicks over easily, whether it's hot or cold. If anything, it was harder to start cold – when it was hot it kicked over first time every time which traditionally has been a problem for four-strokes. This is really good news if you drop it or stall it in a race – there's nothing so frustrating as losing places while you try to fire up a hot four-stroke. Kawasaki have sussed this with what they call an ACR system which is a big, big plus.

I struggled with the front brake for a little bit although I felt they got better as the day progressed – it was a little bit spongy at first.

With the 96db silencer you don't feel or hear any difference but the engine feels stronger than this year's model. There's nowhere in the range where it felt that power was lacking – bottom, mid and top are all there. It also pulls second gear starts very easily – basically, I loved every lap on it!

The 450 has been long awaited and I feel it's been well worth this wait. It's very progressive and easy to ride – I'm not a huge fan of 450s but I had a very enjoyable afternoon on this one.

The 450 runs Kayaba front and rear suspension. It feels very positive in turns – just like the 250 – and the front end never felt like it wanted to push away, it went exactly where I pointed it lap after lap.

Over the faster stutter bumps coming down some of the hills the front end seemed more stable than the 250F but they also run different tyres so it's hard to call but I'd say it's more likely to be down to the fork.

The power's very smooth and very strong but not in an aggressive way. This I feel is very important – 450s are so fast and they can sometimes get you in trouble. Obviously, if



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you took liberties with this it could bite you back hard but the power is so progressive it's easy to use.

On fast, slippery turns it was easy just to roll the power on gradually – the rear end never felt like it was going to break away.

And just like the 250F the 450 is easy to start hot or cold – it would even kick over when it was in gear. One area it does differ from its baby brother though is in the gearbox department. After riding the 450 I felt that the 250 gearbox wasn't as smooth, especially when

you tried to shift up when you were on the gas.

The 450 feels very light – Kawasaki have obviously looked very carefully at shaving weight and their latest machine comes in at under 100kg. This is super-light for a 450cc four-stroke.

The 450 has the same seat thing going on as the 250 but you don't have to go to the aftermarket for things like petal discs and Renthal bars which come as standard so the money you save here could be reinvested in a firmer foam – I know I would if I was racing

one next year.

The bar clamps felt a bit too close – you could possibly change this by spinning the bar clamps in the triple clamps, although by doing this you may lose some of the great feeling you get through the turns.

They may have been slower than some of their competitors when it's come to getting production machines out to the public but Kawasaki are definitely heading in the right direction when it comes to four-strokes.

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specifications

KX250F

Capacity:	249cc
Bore and stroke:	77mm x 53.6mm
Transmission:	Five-speed
Carburettor:	Keihin FCR37
Front suspension:	47mm Showa
Rear suspension:	Showa
Front brake:	250mm disc
Rear brake:	240mm disc
Wheelbase:	1469mm
Seat height:	960mm
Dry weight:	92.5kg



specifications

KX450F

Capacity:	449cc
Bore and stroke:	96mm x 62.1mm
Transmission:	Four-speed
Carburettor:	Keihin FCR40
Front suspension:	48mm Kayaba
Rear suspension:	Kayaba
Front brake:	250mm disc
Rear brake:	240mm disc
Wheelbase:	1485mm
Seat height:	965mm
Dry weight:	99.8kg



Above: Spectacular stuff from Roger De Coster

Right: Bad Brad Lackey hits warp speed on the KX500



PIVOT POINT!

Gaildorf played a big part in deciding the outcome of this year's MX1 world title, giving Jack a strong whiff of déjà vu...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

THE CLASSIC German motocross circuit at Gaildorf – set in glorious, rolling wooded hillsides outside Stuttgart – this year once more proved pivotal in deciding the outcome of a premier world championship chase.

CAS Honda's Josh Coppins had been sticking some real mid-season pressure on MX1 god Stefan Everts but that wet, gluey August weekend saw Belgium's multi-champion effectively stem the Kiwi tide, winning both dramatic motos as Josh struggled in the mire.

Not for the first time, either, for the fast, swooping grasslands of Gaildorf have also previously influenced a world title's ultimate destination.

In 1999 homeboy Pit Beirer actually arrived for the penultimate round of a blazing series

three points in front of French rival Frederic Bolley. The weather – wet that year too – undid the bold Pitbull in front of 25,000 expectant fans and he left 19 points in arrears, his world championship dreams in tatters.

Gaildorf actually hosted the final round in 1994 when South African Greg Albertyn claimed his second successive world 250 crown, beating a broody Everts. On a dry and sunny weekend Stefan showed up 17 points behind his bitter rival and, despite stuffing Greg through the ropes in the final turn, lost by 11!

When I first visited the place, in 1980, a blockbusting 500cc world championship hit Motorsportclub EV Gaildorf with another Belgian, Andre Malherbe, leading northern Californian Brad Lackey in a tempestuous,

ill-tempered contest.

Malherbe's factory Honda won round one in Switzerland from Lackey's Unitrak Kawasaki and reigning 250 world champion Hakan Carlqvist on a 490 Yamaha. Lackey retaliated with a double in Austria and took a narrow lead he would retain for the next three rounds. The suave, cool Belgian responded with a handsome pair of race victories round the sheer chalk cliffs of Gaildefontaine, in France, before Honda and Kawasaki finished joint second to Swedish home hero Carlqvist in Vissefjärda.

Malherbe snatched a tie-breaker with team-mate and reigning 500 champ Graham Noyce at Ruskeasanta in Finland where Lackey's solid brace of thirds meant he and Andre were dead level on 114 points



Andre Vromans motors to the overall at Gaildorf in 1980



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Above: Hakan Carlqvist dominated the second moto of the 1980 German GP



Below: Even in practice Lackey couldn't resist stuffing arch-enemy Andre Malherbe

apiece! Malherbe then traded race wins with his other Honda team-mate, Roger De Coster, in Italy and stole back the championship lead.

Brad, who had been scoring consistently, suffered his first dnf with an engine seizure at Markelo in Holland where Yamaha sand ace Andre Vromans dominated. Then a dismal trip to Carlsbad, California, saw only Lackey pick up any points before the Canadian Grand Prix at St Gabriel which Malherbe edged by a point from Carlqvist after Lackey had won race one!

They returned to Europe and Gaildorf with three rounds left, Malherbe on 182 points and Lackey trailing on 168. Decent weather deteriorated and the first moto got away as rain began to fall with Lackey leading eager Italian meteorite Maurizio Dolce (Maico), Malherbe and De Coster. The Belgians pushed past Dolce who, four laps later, was catapulted downhill in a horrendous collision with German hoodlum Herbie Schmitz, Maurizio suffering a broken wrist.

Malherbe, a strong second, suddenly spluttered to a halt with a suspected cracked piston, leaving Lackey seemingly in charge. But Vromans wore down the bearded 26-year-old American, cutting past after half-an-hour. Brad belligerently counter-attacked. They hit the same rut and collided. Vromans hung on but the

Kawasaki went down and Lackey struggled to restart as De Coster swept into view.

Brad regained sufficient momentum to maintain second place with Carla eventually fourth after being blocked by Schmitz until half-distance. And those 12 points Lackey secured meant Malherbe's championship lead had shrivelled to just two!

Beneath leaden skies, as heavier rain fell, the field slithered into turn one with Lackey once more in front to whistles of encouragement from a huge, happily drenched crowd. And he emerged from a messy opening lap well clear of Gerrit Wolsink (Maico) and Carla. Malherbe had stalled and lay 14th and Vromans had crashed, remounting 20 places further back than the Honda!

Slim, boyish 24-year-old Vromans then tore through the tattered pack at an electrifying rate, reaching 12th place behind his ex-mentor De Coster and Malherbe after five fulminating laps. By this time his Yamaha team-mate Carlqvist had forged a commanding lead, leaving Lackey and Wolsink wrestling for second place. But Malherbe's progress was hampered as his replacement Honda motor suffered ignition problems.

The man destined to become British Open champion that year – Geoff Mayes (Maico) –

clung on bravely to eighth ahead of Ulsterman Laurence Spence (Yamaha), Malherbe and De Coster until Vromans scythed past all four in a single sensational lap!

Malherbe did claw his way up into the top five by half-distance but the misfiring factory Honda later slipped agonisingly back three places to finish behind Ivan van den Broeck (Maico), Spence and Schmitz after unlucky Mayes slid off on the last lap.

A rampaging Vromans finally ran out of steam, leaving Lackey secure in second and Carlqvist in charge a minute clear – although Vromans' valiant recovery nicked an amazing overall win from 'Bad Brad' and the imperious Swedish crown prince!

Sheer slime and unrelenting rain meant only 18 finishers out of 40 starters reached the chequered flag and with a solid pair of seconds Lackey had clearly retaken the championship lead for first time since round four, 192 points to a philosophical Malherbe's 185.

That 1980 epic was only Gaildorf's second ever German Grand Prix. But already it had swung a set of world championship scales for the first time!

Of course, the scales swung back and Malherbe went on to win the title that year – but that's another story...





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MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE?

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

After a seven-year US crashfest Sebastien Tortelli's back in Europe for a single-season mission to end Everts' reign and put KTM at the top of MX1



Sebastien relaxes under the Red Bull KTM awning at Ernee – he's back in Europe full-time in '06

SEBASTIEN TORTELLI is the last guy ever to beat Stefan Everts for a title in a season when the record champ did not get injured. At the age of 27 – after seven years on the US circuit – he returns to the GPs as one half of KTM's twin French spearhead assault on Stefan's MX1 domain.

Sebastien's orange debut was a baptism of fire at the Nations but, riding the 250F in MX2 for his country rather than the 450F he will race next year, he was the fastest guy on the track in class and is already favourite to push Everts to the wire next year.

But Sebastien also makes no secret of the fact that he still has an account to settle in the USA!

"I haven't given up on America but after all of the injuries I need to rebuild my confidence and go back at it in 2007. I want to be fully prepared when I go back for my second chance.

"I got offers in the States but I'm coming back to Europe because the seven years in the USA haven't gone the way I wanted them to. Seven years, seven injuries and I feel like it was time for me to regain some confidence.

"I want to ride supercross again in 2007 but I wanted to switch to 125cc outdoor if I stayed in the US next year. It was either that or come back to race the GPs. I want a title to evolve again, get some confidence and be battling at the front.

"I didn't commit myself to either option until I looked at all of the offers and I wanted to make sure I ended up in a good team. I've been used to racing in a factory team for a long time now

and if I went to a private team I needed to be sure it was what I wanted. I did have one factory ride for 125 in the States but I didn't like it so it was just a question of what was possible.

"I had an open mind about coming back to Europe but on one condition – I wanted the second year going back to US. That was my only condition and KTM were the ones who could offer me that in Europe. I had a good feeling when I talked with Kurt. I could see not only my goals but also theirs and it was clear that they were just as committed as I to winning here in Europe and then 2007 in the States. They want it just as much as I do and that makes me really excited to be riding for KTM Red Bull in the GPs.

"I've only been riding the 250F so far but I have already got a big impression of KTM. I didn't ride a 450 yet so I don't know anything about the bike I will be riding next year but I got a super-nice impression of the 250F.

"Suzuki let me go straight after the final National. KTM are really committed on both sides of the Atlantic to help me out to make it happen and I rode five or six days with the KTM team in the US before I came over here for the Nations.

"I got here on Tuesday, so I got two days of testing here too. I didn't really get to see the whole team yet and there is no decision yet on who will be my race mechanic and all of the regular mechanics were busy so chief mechanic Matte Falt went testing with me and is with me here at the Nations. I didn't meet my team manager Tobbe Gustafsson until I got here but Claudio – the WP guy – and Stefan – the engine guy – both came testing with me and Matte too.

"I got a great impression of all of them – they were very committed to the testing with many solutions which was a great help to me because it was my first time in Europe on a KTM so there were a lot of question marks and they came prepared for that.

"It really is a sign that they are both motivated and capable of great things and I know that KTM Austria are committed to their new bike and are willing to do a lot of things to make it happen.

"I'm looking forward to racing the new 450 in the GPs but I will carry on riding the 250F until Bercy as I rebuild from my injury."

It is significant that Sebastien is clearly focused primarily on success in the Nationals when he looks ahead to 2007.

"I'm a better rider outdoors but I have come on a lot in SX too. I have to admit that it took some time to get used to supercross but today I feel comfortable. This year I was battling for fifth place in SX but I got a few dnfs where I stalled and couldn't restart the bike but that's



Seb raced the 250F for France at the MXdN but will step up to the 450 for MX1 next season



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to a sharper power delivery and more responsive handling. And, with more power and low-end torque, the Unicam four-stroke engine thumps the CRF250R out of corners so strongly that, if you're not on one next year, that view below may just get smaller and smaller.

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Top left: Suzuki America released Tortelli from his contract immediately after the last AMA National so he could race a KTM at the Motocross des Nations

Above: Outdoors is Seb's strong point

Left: A rare European outing for Tortelli at the Geneva SX in 2002

the way racing is.

"I didn't specially get hurt in supercross either, I got hurt outdoor mostly. Maybe I was pushing too much to make it happen – I didn't let things come to me, I went after them and paid the price.

"It's just that those top three guys in supercross are exceptional – in SX they are simply better, it's as simple as that – and I'm not at the level in supercross to think I can beat RC,

Reed or Bubba there. My strength is outdoors but I have to be prepared. I want to rebuild my confidence here and go back for the outdoor. That is the main goal – not only for me but also for KTM."

But first comes the battle for world glory in MX1 next summer and the Everts-Tortelli confrontation is one which even the nine-time champ is eagerly awaiting. When KTM announced Sebastian's signature, Stefan

reacted enthusiastically. "Great. I have waited a long time to get revenge for 1998."

Sebastien grins when this is mentioned. "Well I want revenge for 1997!"

As the last man to beat Stefan over a season, what is the secret? "I don't really know. Stefan has been champion nine times and is a strong guy. I'll just race the best I can every week - that's what matters - and I hope, just like in 1998, that will be enough!"



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Seb's refreshingly honest when it comes to SX – "I'm not at the level in supercross to think I can beat RC, Reed or Bubba..."

profile



© Frank Hoppen

seven-year hitch

SEB'S US INJURY NIGHTMARE

After two world titles in three years, Sebastien moved to America full-time in 1999. So just how would he describe his seven-year US career?

"A disaster! Well, I got second place in the outdoor one year and I got some good races but this was not the extent of success which I went there for. It's been rough with the injuries."

In 1999 Sebastien went 1-1 on his National debut at Glen Helen but didn't finish the year – "I broke my wrist

at Unadilla" – and even in 2000, when he led the Nationals for most of the series and finished second to RC, he was not spared. "I twisted both my ankles."

In 2001 Sebastien won Hangtown, led the series and beat RC at Unadilla. "I got a bad concussion at Troy. In 2002 I was coming back from a shoulder injury. I missed part of the SX and I wasn't in shape all year."

Sebastien finished fourth in the Nationals and at the end of the season moved from Honda to Suzuki.

"In 2003 I damaged my knee in SX, missed the entire outdoor season and even missed part of next season. In 2004 I started halfway through the season. I rode

eight races, got five podiums and finished eighth.

"This year I was very ready to race the Nationals but I dislocated my wrist. It was the week before Vegas. I slid out of a corner and it threw me down the track. I guess that's a rookie mistake but I'm 27 and it shouldn't happen."

"Wrists are very tricky and you want to do it right the first time – if you don't, you're done. If you do it wrong, you can be messed up for the rest of your career. I went to a wrist specialist in the States and I was a full three months in a cast and started slowly rehabilitation. It was kinda long but in the end it was worth it because I have no problems now I am back."



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RICKY RULES!

Team USA win (thanks mainly to RC), France chase them hard and the Brits claim fifth as 30,000 fans turn out to watch the MX des Nations

Words by Alex Hodgkinson

HE CAME, he saw, he kicked ass! Kevin and Ivan do their job too but 30,000 pay to get in at Ernee to see proof that Ricky Carmichael is the man as the Yanks notch up a record-equalling 16th Motocross des Nations win.

"Let's get this straight," declares BT on Sunday evening. "I don't want to read any bull**t on the internet tomorrow. RC is the best and the rest of us are on a par battling for second."

But the Kiwi keeps the US champ honest when they meet in the final moto, is second best individual and leaves for the US with important scalps under his belt. And Coppins is the third best scorer in the event but Cody Cooper can't quite help the Kiwis onto the podium – if only he hadn't crashed on the first lap of his second race...

In the end it's the French hosts who are closest to the US and their trio give everything but the final scores of 16-24 cloud the fact that the only time a Frenchie heads his US class rival is in race two when Vuillemin beats Windham after the Yank crashes twice.

Stefan Everts is on the podium for the 13th time in 13 Nations but he is way off his normal pace and can thank a storming Steve Ramon that Belgium don't lose that third place to the Kiwis.

From the word go the battle to lift the Peter Chamberlain Trophy is a four-way tussle, putting into perspective the workmanlike fifth place that Billy Mack, Nunny and James Noble snatch for Britain.

And the Irish can only watch all afternoon after missing the main programme by a point on Saturday – they've always relied on a top six from Gordy in quali to make the cut and his 12th puts the pressure on Phil McCullough and Martin Barr. But it is oh-so close as Martin rips out of the gate in his quali and leads Vuillemin for two laps before DV12 gets brutal. The transfer is on but Martin stalls, loses an eternity on time and places and the Irish are out.

Martin again holeshots the B final on Sunday morning and Gordy chases Roman Jelen until he falls a lap-and-a-half from home. The Slovenians get their second man across the line fourth and their 1-4 beats the Irish 2-3.

RC already makes the rest look silly in quali, playing with Everts and Pichon in the class war as Josh has to play catch up from a first turn downer. But Tortelli is the man in MX2 and the anticipation is electric as the 40 MX1 and MX2 riders go to the start on Sunday.

The race for the individual win is already over on lap one as RC holeshots, Pichon highsides while second at turn three, Everts gets his jeans dirty halfway round the lap and Josh loses four seconds getting to second on lap one.

After that the British champ loses only a highly respectable single second a lap to the US supremo as Pichon has to work hard to make it back to third – Ernee has always



Standing room only! Josh Coppins launches himself into the valley in front of 30,000 MX-mad fans



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*He's got good back-up but RC
wins the Nations for the US...*



*Team Ireland just fail to
make the cut for the main*



*Ivan Tedesco flies the flag
for the US in MX2*



© Ray Chuss



© Alex Hodgkinson



© Ray Chuss



© Warren Johnson



mxdn

James Noble winds up the RWJ Honda

been one line and new dirt can't change that.

Everts gets back to seventh after seven laps and spends six laps chasing Billy Mac before venting his frustration on the Scot, punting him off the track to gain a place before being gifted another on the final lap when De Reuver bins it. Billy recovers for 10th but it could have been so much better.

But this is a team race and one of the MX2 scores must count...

Tedesco puts space and a couple of MX1 riders between himself and the chasers with a lightning start but Tortelli is on the move. Back in 20th on lap one, Dyno advances at least one place a lap until he comes onto Ramon and pushes the Belgian ever closer to the class leader.

With four laps to go, Seb finds a gap and is immediately on Hot Sauce. The crowd goes bananas as the most stylish rider of the current age puts his front wheel time and again alongside the American. Perhaps he should have stuffed him? Perhaps they would have both gone down? But what a show! If the race

had been 40 plus two, Seb would have got his man and for sure Everts too because they were both hauling in the record champ.

British MX2 man Nunny keeps the flag flying by following Billy across the line for fourth in class.

The MX2 boys are on the gate again after a half-hour breather and the gnarly track is ready to claim a fair few of them as well as some Open class riders.

Ramon is the only one of the MX2 men to get a good jump and Tedesco and Tortelli are not even top 12 as they collide on lap five and are circulating for the discard score.

The US get their second holeshot with Windham and the Yank has waved goodbye before BT can come from nowhere to second. Vuillemin has got past Philippaerts for second early but American Yamaha have already done their bit for the national cause by refusing to release him early from his contract (Suzuki let Tortelli go to KTM straight after the final National), nor will they ship over his trick bike from the States. So David has to ride

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mxdn

Billy Mac posts two solid rides in the MX1 category

© Ray Cluiss

virtually a stocker – prepared by PSM Casola who have no experience all year with a 450 – and it is a slug!

But then Windham falls, BT is past and away and Vuillemin is on the American as he wobbles into the next turn. The Frenchman then evens out the odds as Windham goes down again with a little help before Ramon, who has worked his way past Philippaerts, also goes through in a strange race with more lappers than boys on the gas.

Nunny gets 11th after passing Nobby late on as the UK boys come home in tandem again.

With Stribos sixth, Belgium are announced as leaders on four scores but the effective balance of power is seen on three scores. USA and France are on 12, Belgium 14 and the Kiwis on 26 with the Brits sixth behind Estonia on 32.

But the Belgians have only one score better

than fifth and don't look capable of better so the victory will surely be fought out between the Yanks and the French.

Staying realistic, Pichon cannot hope for better than second to RC so it's up to Vuillemin to again beat Windham by two for the Tricolor to fly high. And the final podium is not decided yet either as the Kiwis have a lot to pull back but BT and Josh are hauling!

It gets physical at turn three as Pichon pushes past Windham for the lead but RC rails the outside berm, puts the Frenchman's front wheel into the soft dirt at turn four and the order is RC, Windham, Josh and Pichon.

Pichon gets Josh on lap two but BT has already come from a miserable start to second to slug it out with RC as the pair out-distance the rest at two-seconds-a-lap. It's the very last lap before Ben lets Carmichael soak up the applause at reduced pace – Mitch Payton has

only seen BT ride once before but now knows he's backed a winner.

French hopes lay with the possibility of the nervous Windham wobbling under pressure – and Pichon keeps the pressure firmly on until he goes down himself in a desperate final lap as Vuillemin comes home nearly a minute down, his bike not capable of more.

Everts falls again on lap one and it is Stribos in eighth who just salvages bronze for Belgium as Billy and Nobby outscore Leok and Laansoo to leapfrog the Estonians for fifth.

The win takes USA onto 16, equal with the British Empire (that's what the team was called for the first four victories in 1947, 1949, 1950 and 1952) with next year's race at Farleigh.

Belgium also have something to prove there because they won both previous Nations down Wiltshire way.

Hotel bookings are now being taken!



Nunny chases Tortelli and Tedesco as Noble hammers downhill

© Alex Houghton

Nunny heads Hot Sauce



© Warren Johnson

best of british!

BROWN AND PETERS LEAD OUR SIDECARCROSS CREWS TO SECOND

Words by Leen van der Sluis Photo by Bert van der Sluis

While the two-wheeled warriors are scrapping it out in France, the Sidecarcross des Nations goes off at Jauer in Eastern Germany – and the three-crew, six-man GB team come away with a surprise second place.

Macclesfield's Stuart Brown and his passenger Jason Peters head the GB effort together with brothers John and Mark Watson and Scott Wilkinson and Gary Burt. And the Brits are in front after the opening moto thanks to Brown and Watson steering their outfits to a 2-3 behind Swede Henke Soderqvist.

Moto two sees the Watson brothers holding down second early on until problems with the sidecar push them back to 11th. The Wilkinson/Burt pairing manages a great ninth but Latvia move into the lead thanks to a win by Krister Sergis/Kaspars Stupelis and third for Maris Rupeiks/Harald Kurpnieks.

Brown and Peters come out fighting in race three but their second place finish – backed up by Wilkinson in 11th – isn't enough to overhaul Latvia who again take the race win thanks to Sergis/Stupelis.

"This is a very good result for our team," reckons Stuart. "Everyone in the team worked hard for the team result. The Watson brothers did the impossible to finish the second heat with a broken rail – that's risky and dangerous."

Brown and Peters help the Brits to second in the Sidecarcross des Nations





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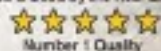
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© Alex Hodgkinson

Team America – F#@& Yeah!
Carmichael, flanked by
Vuillemin and Windham,
pops his cork!



© Warren Johnson



**Home hero David Vuillemin
stays ahead of Billy Mac**

results

RACE ONE (MX1/MX2)

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Ricky Carmichael | (US – Suzuki) |
| 2 | Josh Coppins | (NZ – Honda) |
| 3 | Mickael Pichon | (F – Honda) |
| 4 | Tanel Leok | (Est – Kawasaki) |
| 5 | Stefan Everts | (B – Yamaha) |
| 6 | Ivan Tedesco | (US – Kawasaki) |
| 7 | Sebastien Tortelli | (F – KTM) |
| 8 | Marc De Reuver | (NL – KTM) |
| 9 | Steve Ramon | (B – KTM) |
| 10 | Billy MacKenzie | (GB – Yamaha) |
| 11 | Carl Nunn | (GB – KTM) |

RACE TWO (MX2/OPEN)

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Ben Townley | (NZ – KTM) |
| 2 | David Vuillemin | (F – Yamaha) |
| 3 | Steve Ramon | (B – KTM) |
| 4 | David Philippaerts | (I – KTM) |
| 5 | Kevin Windham | (US – Honda) |
| 6 | Kevin Strijbos | (B – Suzuki) |
| 7 | Francisco Garcia Vico | (E – Honda) |
| 8 | Marc Ristori | (CH – Honda) |
| 9 | Yoshitaka Atsuta | (Jap – Suzuki) |
| 10 | Matti Seistola | (SF – Honda) |
| 11 | Carl Nunn | (GB – KTM) |
| 12 | James Noble | (GB – Honda) |

RACE THREE (MX1/OPEN)

- | | | |
|----|------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Ricky Carmichael | (US – Suzuki) |
| 2 | Ben Townley | (NZ – KTM) |
| 3 | Kevin Windham | (US – Honda) |
| 4 | Josh Coppins | (NZ – Honda) |
| 5 | Mickael Pichon | (F – Honda) |
| 6 | Marc De Reuver | (NL – KTM) |
| 7 | David Vuillemin | (F – Yamaha) |
| 8 | Kevin Strijbos | (B – Suzuki) |
| 9 | Stefan Everts | (B – Yamaha) |
| 10 | Tanel Leok | (Est – Kawasaki) |
| 12 | Billy MacKenzie | (GB – Yamaha) |
| 13 | James Noble | (GB – Honda) |

FINAL STANDINGS

- 1 USA 16 points, 2 France 24, 3 Belgium 31,
4 New Zealand 32, 5 Great Britain 56,
6 Estonia 59, 7 Holland 82, 8 Portugal 83,
9 South Africa 86, 10 Spain 99

★ TEAM AMERICA ★ F#@& YEAH!

THE MOTOCROSS DES NATIONS USED TO BE THE PINNACLE OF THE ENTIRE SPORT. IN THE '70s AND '80s THE RACE BECAME THE STUFF LEGENDS ARE MADE OUT OF – AND IT MADE LEGENDS OUT OF QUITE A FEW RIDERS AS WELL.

JOHNNY O'MARA WILL FOREVER BE REMEMBERED FOR BEATING EVERYONE (EXCEPT FOR HIS AMERICAN 500cc TEAM-MATE DAVID BAILEY) IN '86 ON HIS CR125 IN A 125cc/500cc MOTO AND JEFF WARD'S LEGEND WAS MADE CLEARER BY HIS RECORD SEVEN MXdN TEAM VICTORIES.

Then there are the tales of Danny 'Magoo' Chandler's domination of the event and the legend of the US team as a whole as we won a

record 14 straight MXdN events between 1981 and 1994.

However, with the US schedule becoming so massive in recent years – and the fact that there hasn't been an MXdN on US soil since 1987 (the one and only time it was in the USA, at Unadilla), the MXdN has begun to carry less importance with the American MX industry. Today the most important thing is to win the 250cc SX championship and going to Europe for the MXdN gives your competitors a head start on testing and training for Anaheim I.

Since the AMA riders have dwindled at the MXdN in recent years, so have the crowds. It's not just the American team that doesn't show up very often in Europe anymore. Frequently, when Team USA bows out, the

Team USA win in France and, according to Cox*, single-handedly save the MX des Nations!

Words and photos by STEVE COX



*Well, what do you expect? He's a Yank...



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WINDHAM'S QUICK – BUT IS HE ANY QUICKER THAN THE GP REGULARS? AND DOES HE NEED TO BE WITH RICKY IN THE TEAM?



manufacturers do too. That leaves American-based foreigners such as Chad Reed (Australia), David Vuillemin (France), Sebastien Tortelli (France) and more out of the race as well.

With so many stars missing, many times the enthusiasm of the fans can be hindered as well. After all, without the AMA riders at the MXdN it's basically just another GP with a different format – you have the same stars racing against the same stars.

However, with so much at stake in terms of testing and training for the upcoming supercross season (which

unofficially starts at the US Open only 12 days after the MXdN), if the AMA riders (and, more specifically, Team USA) are going to go to the MXdN the only good time to do it is when you have the best team possible – and the best chance at winning!

"I'll be 28 at the end of the next supercross season and Ricky and I have talked about it – we're both kind of like old men," says Kevin Windham. "Right Stefan [to Everts]? Well, maybe just kind of old. Stefan was talking to me earlier in the day about being old and how many years he's been here. But sometimes it makes sense for me to come and this year it did and I had a great time. I hope to come again in the future.

"Unfortunately, in America they keep adding races. When they add races, we still have to test and it's almost like we don't have time to prepare our machine. In two weeks we start our supercross season. It's not a mandatory race but everyone does it. If everyone does it

and I don't, they're one race up on me. Shortly after that we start with the Canadian rounds and then after that we get into a 16-race supercross series that takes up 18 weeks. As a family man with kids and a wife at home, sometimes racing isn't the most important thing in my life. I have to juggle many things in my life but I had a great time and I'll go home tomorrow with no regrets. This is a win that tops all win lists."

And as much as Ricky Carmichael loves the MXdN, he agrees with Windham. "Like Kevin said, we race so much at home that it's a little overkill," reckons Ricky. "The factories pay us a lot of money now and, to be honest, the factories don't care about this race. They care about 250 supercross. We come because we want to, not because they want to. It's for pride. I just want all of the fans at home to know that. That's why it was so sweet to win. David [Vuillemin] could tell you and Sebastien [Tortelli] could tell you that we race a lot over there and I know



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of two guys in California right now that are a pain in the ass in supercross and motocross and they've got two weeks on us. We put ourselves out a lot to come here so when we do come here we try to make the best out of it."

With the AMA riders competing in this year's event, though, the fans came out – and they came out in droves. The fans in Europe (at least for the MXdN) are different from any fans you see in the USA. Air horns are actually banned at the AMA Nationals but they're encouraged in Europe. The result at the des Nations was 30,000 screaming, maniacal, jingoist fans sporting costumes representing their country, carrying air horns and other noise-making contraptions like chainsaws (without the chains). It was truly incredible.

The venue at Ernee, France, is perfect for spectators. The track is in a canyon of sorts, with the track on one side of the valley and the spectator area on the other. It creates perfect viewing for fans but the trade-off is that the capacity is rather limited. It was busting at the seams the day of the race.

Every time a French rider would come by a section of fans, the entire area would erupt. That is another key difference between the MXdN and anything we see in the USA. The people weren't just there for 'something to do', they were die-hard fans who knew exactly what was going on at all times – despite their varying levels of inebriation.

This is a fact not lost on Ricky Carmichael and it's part of why he loves the event so much.

"They're different fans over here than back home, for sure," Carmichael says. "They have a different demeanour and they know what's going on. It's not just like something to do on a Sunday or a Saturday night. They really know what's going on. I'm really thankful for my fans here and in America who supported us."

Before the event Team USA did everything short of claiming the victory. At the various Nationals leading up to the event the most common comment was "we're going to do some damage". But this smack-talk had the pits in an uproar and created a GP vs AMA rivalry where even during the Saturday qualifiers, GP riders were out on the track cheering on their foes against the evil Americans.

In the end, though, it didn't help much. Team USA took the win as predicted – a win that tied America with Britain for the most MXdN wins in history by one country. The nail in the coffin for the Euros took place on the first lap of the final moto when Windham had the holeshot followed by Mickael Pichon and Carmichael. Coming into the moto, USA and France were tied for the lead of the event after throwing away their lowest score and Pichon made an aggressive pass on Windham.

Carmichael saw the whole thing and he made sure that Pichon knew it two turns later. A right-hand sweeper led into a left-hand turn before a small double and Carmichael got a run through the sweeper and charged up the inside of Pichon into the left-hander, took his line away and then didn't jump the double. The result was that Windham took the lead and Pichon dropped to fourth.

"We're a team, no doubt about it," Windham says. "Pichon came in aggressively before that and Ricky had a

bird's eye view of it and he hooked me up. He saw what was going on and he didn't like it and that's teamwork right there. Ricky didn't do anything nasty but he let Pichon know in a very American way that we weren't going to get picked on. He hooked me up. We talked about it after the race. It was a team effort today."

In the end it was the solidarity of the American team that won the day. "I wanted these two guys to have the same feeling that I had in France in 2000," Carmichael says. "It was a good day. I know everyone says 'me me me' but there's two other guys on this team who rose to the occasion. I was really pumped for Kevin to commit when he did – he had a great attitude and it showed today. And with Ivan, I really think he rode better than he rode the last three Nationals at home so I was happy to see that."

Tedesco was grateful for the experience on the eve of his move to the 250cc class in 2006 as a team-mate of Ricky Carmichael at Makita Suzuki. "I'd say this is close to the top for me," Tedesco grins. "My outdoor title was probably the best but this is one of the coolest experiences I've ever had with the crowd and such. You have to be here to know what I'm saying but it's great."

So will Team USA be at the MXdN next year at Farleigh Castle?

"I want to come. I don't know how many more years I'm going to race full seasons of supercross and motocross but the des Nations is something that I want to do all the time," Carmichael adds. "I think that I'll be good enough and in good enough shape to do this race over and over. I definitely want to come again and the feeling that my two team-mates got today is just enough to get them to want to come back too."



HOT SAUCE IS IMPRESSIVE



WACKY RACES!

Langston wins and Tedesco's on top but Mike Alessi's the star of the show at Glen Helen

Words and photos by STEVE COX

"The kid's an idiot" – Ivan Tedesco on Mike Alessi from the podium at the Glen Helen National

UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES, WHEN A RIDER COMES INTO THE FINAL RACE OF THE YEAR WITH A 35-POINT LEAD IN THE CHAMPIONSHIP DRAMA IS THE LAST THING YOU EXPECT. BUT ANY TIME RED BULL KTM'S MIKE ALESSI IS ON THE TRACK, DRAMA'S NEVER FAR AWAY!

AND AT THE AMA 125cc NATIONAL MX FINALE AT GLEN HELEN RACEWAY, DRAMA CERTAINLY ABOUNDS.

USA MXdN TEAM MEMBER IVAN TEDESCO IS THE MAN SPORTING THE POINTS LEAD AND EVEN IF ALESSI – SECOND IN POINTS – WINS BOTH MOTOS, ALL IVAN NEEDS IS ONE TOP FIVE FINISH TO CLINCH THE TITLE. ON THE FIRST LAP OF THE FIRST MOTO IT BECOMES

CLEAR THAT IVAN MAY HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT MOTO TWO AS HE TANGLES WITH MAKITA SUZUKI'S BROCK HEPLER AND GOES DOWN IN A HEAP.

"IT WAS A CRAZY DAY FOR ME," TEDESCO SAYS. "I CAME INTO THE FIRST MOTO WITH A PRETTY GOOD POINTS LEAD AND I GOT A GOOD START LIKE I NEEDED AND HEPLER GOT A LITTLE CRAZY IN A WHOOP SECTION IN THE BACK AND CRASHED. WHEN HIS BIKE FELL OVER IT LANDED ON THE DOWNSIDE OF A TRIPLE – I WAS ALREADY IN THE AIR. I WENT OVER THE BARS PRETTY GOOD. I WAS LUCKY NOT TO GET HURT ON THAT ONE. THEN I GOT UP AND I HAD TO PUT MY CHAIN BACK ON AND I DIDN'T GET ANY POINTS. THAT WAS BASICALLY MY FIRST MOTO."

Meanwhile, the race up front involves new Pro Circuit recruit Ryan Villopoto in third, Alessi in second and Pro Circuit's Grant Langston (on an aluminium-framed 2006 KX250F) in the lead. The top three remain in that order for much of the race, although Alessi makes a few passes for

the lead that stick for as much as two laps at a time. With two to go Langston makes a bid for the lead on Alessi and is punted off the track not too long afterward.

"The first moto was pretty good," Langston says. "I didn't get the holeshot but I managed to get the lead in the second turn. I don't know, I tend to ride too cautious when I'm in the lead and I let those guys – Ryan and Alessi – get pretty close and I ended up getting into a dogfight with Alessi at the end there. He passed me pretty aggressively – he hit my front wheel. No big deal, I probably would've done the same thing.

"But on the second-to-last lap I got him going down the big downhill up the inside and kept it clean then did the step-up double and then he just banzai'd me and knocked me off the track. I cut a portion of the track off but I didn't want to gain an advantage so I let him by me, figuring that should be okay. Then I passed him back and up

AMERICAN IDIOT! Langston lays into Alessi

Not only did Ivan Tedesco call Mike Alessi an idiot on the podium, Grant Langston reiterated it in the press conference.

"There's a difference between racing and just being an idiot and Alessi was just being an idiot," Langston says. "I just thought it was really funny. I heard it afterwards that Walker turned around and punched Alessi. I thought that was kind of funny. I tried to race clean. I didn't want to take Alessi out and be the bad guy and have people say I took him out to help Ivan. It's probably going to make for some great TV footage, though. I'm happy for Ryan too – he rode awesome."

LANGSTON SECURES HIS FOURTH OVERALL WIN OF THE SEASON AT GLEN HELEN

the hill he kicked me. I kind of lost my cool a little bit. I got docked five seconds for cutting the track."

With the five-second penalty, even though Langston crosses the line first, he's credited with second and Alessi is credited with the win. That means that in moto two Tedesco still needs a top five to guarantee the title.

The games start on the parade lap and it gets really interesting before the completion of the first lap of the race.

"Second moto, I just knew I was going to win," says the confident Langston. "I lined up next to Alessi and on the 30-second board he just started elbowing me. Actually – Villopoto saw him – on the parade lap he rode into me. So he was really starting to tick me off. Then, when we came out of the gate, I slammed him and on the first lap he hit me then he just rode like an idiot and pinned it into the side of Ivan right in front of me."

As a result Alessi and Tedesco – the two championship contenders – go down in a heap. But that's not the crazy part.

"The second moto I got a good start like I needed – I was in third, I believe. And going down that mud straightaway into a right-hander, I was kind of in the middle and he



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went to the inside and started clicking gears and never shut off," Tedesco says of Alessi.

"He just aimed for me and took us both down. He pretty much t-boned me. My whole right side is beat up and I've got tyre tracks up my back – it didn't feel too good. I'm not going to really be racing him anymore, or else I might try and pay him back. It'll be a few years but I'll get him someday.

"I'm pretty sore from that and when I tried to get up he was standing on my bike trying to keep me from getting my bike up, trying to push me down and stuff. It took every ounce of

everything not to hit that kid – to uppercut him up his helmet. But I knew I didn't want to get disqualified and I held back, then [Matt] Walker came and kind of helped me out. I got my bike back going and my bike was kind of beat up and I was beat up so I just cruised in with 12th and got me the championship.

"I kept it [the bike] running the whole time. I just wanted to keep my bike running because those things are so hard to start and he was standing on top of my bike. I pushed him off of it once and then I just tried to focus on keeping it running because I saw that his wasn't running. I just waited for him to do whatever he had to do, then I got up."

There is additional concern for Alessi's antics as he appears at one point to be stomping on Tedesco's front spokes and even reaching for the kill switch on Tedesco's bike in the confrontation.

Whatever he was trying, Alessi finishes well behind Tedesco in the race and loses the championship by 20 points.

There may be additional penalties pending for Alessi but the AMA hasn't come out with any decisions just yet.

Villopoto has the early lead in the moto, with

TEDESCO TAKES THE OUTDOOR CROWN TO ADD TO HIS SX TITLE





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Jeff Alessi on his heels. After the big crash, Langston sits third and quickly passes the younger Alessi and reels in Villopoto. He gets around Villopoto in rather short order and just takes off for the moto – and overall – win.

It's Langston's fourth overall win of the season – twice what any other rider achieved. With his win, Langston moves past Marty Smith, Bob Hannah and Micky Dymond on the all-time 125cc National win list.

"Obviously, being fast is important but if you don't put it together in the races it doesn't mean anything," Langston says. "I won four races this year and no-one else won more than two but besides the four wins I was never on the podium. That's just not how you win a championship. But sometimes that's how the racing goes."

In only his third AMA National, Villopoto's 3-2 is good for second overall. Between Langston winning, Villopoto getting his first podium and Tedesco getting his first outdoor championship it's a very PC day, despite the efforts to the contrary.

"It feels good. I kind of flew under the radar coming into the season," Tedesco says. "I just kept getting better and better and got a couple wins, then got a good points lead. It was hard for me to push it and Steel City was pretty hard for me but I was focused on the title too much. It ended up working out all right for me and it feels

good to be the champion. I guess I wouldn't have put my money on me either. A lot of people wouldn't have bet on me at the beginning of the season."

While controversy rages in the 125cc class, up in the 250s it's business as usual for Ricky Carmichael. RC's only ever lost one race at Glen Helen – in 2001 when he flew off the top of a hill and had to repeat almost a quarter of the track when he remounted. He caught up to eighth in that moto and then won moto two but lost the overall.

But to say he has been dominant at the facility is a bit of an understatement. Of course, you can say something similar about almost every track on the National schedule.

But the double-moto sweep at Glen Helen is extra sweet for a few reasons. First off, it completes a third undefeated – that's overalls – MX season for the 25-year-old. Second, it's Suzuki's first outdoor National title since 1999 (Greg Albertyn's '99 title is also the last 250cc title not won by RC). And, finally, Ricky wins the race wearing his MXdN gear and using the USA graphics – along with #101 – on his RM-Z450.

"Actually, it looked for sure like Ernesto Fonseca would get all of the holeshots but he went in hot both times and I snuck underneath him," Carmichael says. "Then they came out of that turn really fast, I tried to go a little bit faster into that left-hander and I got sideways and hit a big hole and Kevin got by me. I followed him a little bit, then was able to get by him.


"And damn if I didn't do the same exact thing in the second moto but I did it with some style. I hit that big hole and kind of made a double out of it and went way to the outside and Ernie went by me. He went down that first

downhill wide-open, hit the damned bump, his back end kicked up and the guy was on a mission, for sure."

Fonseca ends up third in the championship after a bit of team tactics in moto two as Windham makes sure to hang behind him – between Fonseca and David Vuillemin – to give Fonseca the points he needs to beat Vuillemin. Fonseca finishes two points in front of Vuillemin in what may be the first time team tactics have ever come into play for third in a championship – although both Fonseca and Windham deny it.

"I was fully aware of the points – and there wasn't team orders – but how could you not be aware of it?" Windham says. "They've been going back and forth all season long and I think it's a shame to take credit away from Ernie. In the first moto look at how well he did. He made a little time on us there at the end of the first moto and in the second moto he rode great too.

"He was hanging it out. I was behind him and I saw his front numberplate like four times. He was going for it. He rode good. I knew that the topic was going to come up. I'm not stupid. But Ernie definitely rode as well as David. I was trying to get around him – I wasn't going to just clean him out but a lot of the corners at the bottom where I was faster, it got kind of one-lined. It just worked out that he had the lead and I couldn't do anything with it. I knew I was going to have to face the question but Ernie rode a great year and a great race today."

However, Fonseca has never beaten Windham in a heads-up motocross race so it is – to say the least – a peculiar time for Fonseca to speed up or Windham to slow down. 

STROKER GENIUS!

RC's SX switch

RC's going back to a two-stroke for supercross! "We're all set to go on the two-stroke," Carmichael says. "The cool thing that I'm happy with at Suzuki is that we have a good two-stroke for supercross and a good four-stroke for outdoors. We've had a year to figure out what we can do better and we have the two-stroke ready to go."

FINAL SERIES STANDINGS

125cc

1	Ivan Tedesco	412	(2 wins)
2	Mike Alessi	392	(2 wins)
3	Andrew Short	374	(1 win)
4	Grant Langston	363	(4 wins)
5	Mike Brown	335	(1 win)
6	Broc Hepler	321	(2 wins)
7	Josh Grant	302	
8	Davi Millsaps	268	
9	Matt Walker	239	
10	Danny Smith	194	

FINAL SERIES STANDINGS

250cc

1	Ricky Carmichael	594	(12 wins)
2	Kevin Windham	485	
3	Ernesto Fonseca	392	
4	David Vuillemin	390	
5	Travis Preston	308	
6	Michael Byrne	294	
7	John Dowd	273	
8	Chad Reed	258	
9	Nick Wey	233	
10	Jeff Dement	152	



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words by **JEFF KOCAN** courtesy of RacerX photo by **STEVE COX**

WINNER TAKES ALL...

...and this season's big winner is Ricky Carmichael who's just added the MXdN to his US treble

So that's that then. The 2005 season is in the books and it's been one to remember – although the reason for this is quite different from what we expected at the beginning of the year. This was, of course, to be the year of the Perfect Storm when Ricky Carmichael, Kevin Windham, Chad Reed and the unquestionably gifted teenager James Stewart would battle it out for wins each week in an unprecedented frenzy of competitive supercross and motocross competition.

What we got instead was quite possibly the most staggering display of alpha-male dominance this sport has ever seen. In a season which began with so many questions, so many possibilities, Carmichael was the only answer. With the competition stacked around him on all sides and the media questioning whether he could maintain his status at the top of the American racing game, he dropped the hammer.

King of the hill, last man standing, a man at the absolute pinnacle of his profession. RC wrapped up all three major US titles – THQ AMA Supercross, World Supercross GP and AMA 250 Motocross – and added a winning individual and team ride at the Motocross des Nations in Ernee, France, as an exclamation mark. It's never happened before and may never happen again – unless Ricky himself does it again.

If you've been reading this column long enough, you know that I like to squeeze in the occasional reference to English football. It's not some misguided attempt to ingratiate myself to an overseas crowd, it's a very serious thing for me. I'm a huge fan (and currently first place in my Fantasy Premiership league thank you very much) and while I know that many of you would rather I just stick to motorcycles on this page, something has been on my mind lately.

The Premiership headlines of late have been about how boring the league seems so far. More and more clubs are adopting the dreaded 4-5-1 and the feel is that teams are more concerned with not losing than with actually winning. Compounding the misery is the fact that Chelsea appear to have locked up the title in October. Nobody likes the idea of a season-long battle for second place but, if things stay as they are, that's what we're all in for.

That, however, is exactly what the entire 2005 season was in American motocross and supercross – and very few people seem to mind. That's to me a perfect illustration of the difference between team and individual sports.

Sure, people complained about a lack of competition during the actual season – an assured winner is never something you want in a competitive arena. But even if Chelsea go undefeated this season – even if they win the treble – it will be no match for Carmichael's accomplishment.

If a Russian billionaire had actually assembled Carmichael, Frankensteinovich-style, then perhaps we could begrudge him his dominance in our nation's series. But only Mr and Mrs Carmichael are responsible for his biology. The rest is down to RC himself. He realized long ago what it takes to be a true champion and he spends every waking moment in pursuit of perfection.

One story in particular has always stood out for me. Back in May of 2001 Carmichael won the season-ending Las Vegas Supercross. The next day at 8.30am – just 12 hours before he was set to pick up his championship trophy at the AMA Awards Banquet – he was in the hotel gym doing cardio workouts with his good friend Johnny O'Mara. While the rest of the industry was still asleep (or,

RICKY RODE IN HIS MXdN GET-UP AT GLEN HELEN



in many cases, still awake), he only had winning on his mind.

That sort of dedication and mental discipline is almost frightening. After a long Premiership season you expect the boys to go a little crazy, blow off some steam, then spend a couple months on a beach in Spain boozing and getting fat (otherwise, they would have no excuses for being slow and awful through mid-September).

But Carmichael knows there is no room for that now. There will be plenty of time for blowing off steam after he retires.

I sometimes wonder if it's even possible for the rest of us to have that sort of discipline, that perfect a grasp on the concept of delayed gratification. Surely if it's that simple we'd all be doing it, right? But that level of patience seems almost unnatural to most of us. Unless you're a Buddhist monk, or possibly Sting, you just don't

have that kind of focus (I've been daydreaming ever since the bit about drinking on the beach in Spain which I wrote about an hour ago).

So maybe that's my question. Do you have that drive, that discipline, that ability to be of one mind? Is it as simple as making the decision and sticking to it or is it something more, something almost spiritual that occurs rarely – almost by accident – in this most easily distracted of species?

Even more impressive, Carmichael has become a master of motocross and supercross – two increasingly distinct disciplines – and few come close to him in either. It's like being a ninja and a samurai – playing the sax like Coltrane and the guitar like Hendrix. He is better at what he does than you or I will ever be at anything. When I watch him ride, I am fascinated, excited and more than a little puzzled. But I will never, ever be bored.



medical milway

Alan Milway is a qualified sports scientist who runs MX Fitness specialising in training motocross and enduro riders. For more information on how Alan can help you train go to his website www.mxfitness.co.uk or call him on 07810 827427



A DAY AT THE RACES

Our MX medicine man heads to Whitby for a race day case study on Mark Hucklebridge

Words by Alan Milway Photos by Ray Chuss

IT WAS the Saturday afternoon before the Whitby round of the Maxxis British champs and I caught up with Innovate Honda rider Mark Hucklebridge as he made his way across the soggy field that was to be the pits for the weekend.

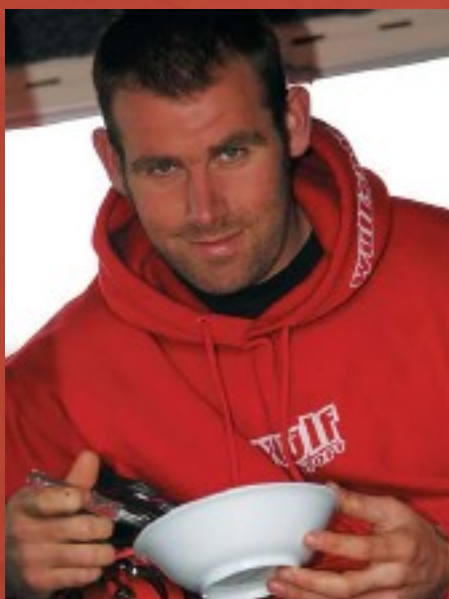
"We'll have to catch up for a chat a bit later," says Mark. "I've got to fit a new cylinder in the bike and put up the truck awning now."

This was the first surprise for me – so much for the pro riders just doing the riding. His 'easy day' today wasn't just going to be walking the track as he obviously had some serious work to do to even get himself to the line tomorrow.

I have a chance to sit down with Mark later that evening and we discuss how things have

been going for him. The lifestyle of a professional MX rider is one envied by many but lived by few – for Monster it is clearly a passion but with it comes hard work and a lot of travelling. Without a full-time mechanic he has to juggle his time to work on the bike during the week just to reach the line the next weekend. Now add to this training and organising ferries for the GPs, talking to sponsors and trying to find the necessary funding...

Mark is usually found lining up on the MX1 gate but at Whitby he was racing the smaller Honda 250F in MX2. "It's that time of year and I want to try and line up a ride for next season to compete in the GPs. Riding the MX2 class will hopefully open up a few more doors."



RACE DAY

7.30am

My phone beeps and wakes me up. It's a text from Sully telling me I can catch up with snapper Ray Chuss over at the Innovate truck – apparently, he'll be the one dressed as a Japanese schoolgirl!

Mark won't be lying in either. First task of the day is to eat a decent breakfast of cereal and toast to set him up – then he can get the bike set up ready for MX2 qualifying with his 'temporary' mechanic Jeff Davies (Jeff normally spins wrenches for Alex Rach but Alex is injured).

9.30am

The little four-bangers and their pilots wait to head out onto the sloppy but still inviting track. The format is quickest timed lap gets first gate pick – they have 15 minutes of practice and then timed qualification for 30 minutes. Mark is looking fast and smooth on his unfamiliar machine.

10.45am

As the chequers fall to signify the end of qualifying Mark is 11th fastest with Billy Mac, Gareth Swanepoel and Brad Anderson taking the top spots five seconds or so ahead of him. Back at the truck Mark isn't very happy with the result but knows he still has a good pick.

Covered in mud and with perspiration showing the effort spent, Mark hands his bike to Jeff for cleaning then cleans himself up, sorts out some fresh Wulfsport kit for race one and slips into some casual clothes. He now has some time to himself to rehydrate with plain water.

12pm

The pits are now bustling with fans. Mark's bike is gleaming again and is being worked on feverishly by Jeff. Meanwhile, Mark's over under the RWJ truck awning having a chat with some of the guys there and taking it easy. This part of the day is almost as important for a rider as the races – the relationship with the fans is vital and good for the sponsors too.

"The public pay to see you and it's good when someone wants to come over and wish you well," explains Mark. "Some fans travel week-in, week-out to see you and the fans who are behind you are positive people. You pick up that vibe from them and can use it."

By this time Mark has taken on more water and a pasta meal or a favourite of his – Super Noodles – for energy

12.50pm

Mark comes out of his motorhome in fresh gear ready to go to the line. His warm-up routine has changed from last year when he had a turbo trainer in the awning to increase the blood flow and get his heart ready for the race ahead. Now as he races the GPs out of his VW (his Innovate deal doesn't extend to the world championship) there's very limited room and there simply isn't the space for it so he goes without.

He puts on a big Wulfsport jacket to keep him warm and makes his way down to staging to wait for the whistle to blow as the signal to start his engine and go to the line.

13.10pm

The riders file one by one around the slippery uphill grass slope that takes them from the parc ferme to the gate. Elbows go up and eyes fix on the starter's board 50 metres up the track.

13.12pm

The gate drops for race one and they all blast up the grassy hill to turn one. Mark has an okay start and is sitting just inside the top 10 on lap one. Gareth Swanepoel and Billy Mac get a great jump and are out front with Brad Anderson hanging on to their coat tails and trying to shrug off the orange blur that is Carl Nunn.

13.45pm

Gareth Swanepoel takes a surprise win in front of Billy Mac. Mark crosses the line a creditable seventh after holding his place on the track for most of the race. As I wander back through the pits I pass Swanepoel on his turbo trainer under the Molson Kawasaki awning, spinning away and cooling down after his victory while the mechanics go to work on the green bike.

13.50pm

Back at the Innovate truck Huck is going over how the race has gone and how the bike has been working with his mechanic. They will make any adjustments deemed necessary for race two and try to get the best from the red machine. It is more water and more carbohydrates for Mark as he relaxes after battle with pasta and energy bars.

2pm

With the MX1 class lining up at the gate, Mark has some time to recover, regain his energy and relax before race two. The mechanics for the MX2 riders are all beavering away on the

still-warm bikes – meanwhile, the riders have some time to check out some racing for themselves and perhaps spot a few lines for race two.

3.25pm

Mark's had a good break and is now feeling fresh again and ready to go. After relaxing in his motorhome with girlfriend Emma he steps back out and into his boots to walk down to the line for the second moto while his mechanic pushes the bike to the start.

3.45pm

The gate drops and Mark charges up the hill to the apex of the first turn, coming around in fifth. But as the leaders MacKenzie, Swanepoel and Nunn are battling at the front Mark has bike trouble. As he charges down one of the straights the bike seizes and locks up the rear wheel, sending Mark over the bars. A disappointing end to the race and the weekend for him.

4.15pm

Back at the Innovate truck it's time to get cleaned up again while the mechanic looks over the damaged bike. The diagnosis is a broken conrod but Mark remains philosophical. "I only had one bike for this weekend and without a spare I'm glad it didn't happen in the first race as we couldn't have fixed it for race two."

5pm

As I head off from the track before the tractors start towing the trucks out, Mark still has to help the team tear down the awning and help them get packed up – he won't be leaving for a couple of hours yet.

When he does leave he'll drive for a few hours before getting his head down.

Things didn't go as well as Mark would have liked this time but in a season with so many races in so many places, next weekend's race is already beckoning.

The privateer life is anything but easy and this weekend there wasn't the reward he would have liked. But with his strong work ethic and optimism he will keep looking for that break to get the support on the international stage that he deserves.

Keep your eyes peeled for Huck and next time you see him at a race you'll have a better idea of what he's been through to get there...



SX MACHINES!

dbr's Deputy Dawg gets revved up for a splendid supercross comeback while Walker lines up some SX action of his own...

Words and photos by Sutt

"Sutt! Are you crazy? Don't you remember what happened last time? You'll end up on your arse!" Senor Lawless' appraisal of my recently unearthed plans to make yet another supercross comeback were far from favourable and it wasn't just he who doubted the Sutton SX skills...

My dear old mother was equally unenthralled. "Oh Anthony! Are you crazy? Don't you remember what happened last time? You'll end up on your backside!" And not even Chussy – who I can usually count on to back my madcap ideas – was too impressed by the idea. "Dude! Are you crazy? Don't you remember what happened last time? You'll end up on your butt!" Heck, even the new MD was joining in! "Dave! Are you crazy? Someone told me what happened last time! Apparently there's a good chance you'll end up on your elbow!"

But being an anarchist (don't you mean antichrist? – SL) I decided to **** authority and go do it anyway. All that was left to do now was prep the little red puppy and do a whole lotta physical fitness training – but we'll skip that bit for now and crack on with the bike.

The Honda's not had as much use this year as I'd hoped. In fact, the last time it left the dbr workshop/kitchen area was fricking ages ago mostly down to the fact that A) I'm horribly overworked B) My knee's suffering some sort of catastrophic meltdown and C) Our local practice track's temporarily closed due to complaints over noise. Bummer!

But what action the Honda has seen has been impressive – from the bike's side of things anyway. Even with only the most basic of routine maintenance the bike hasn't missed a beat all year long and still feels tight and crisp.

I've kept everything's pretty much stock – the only changes being in the graphics and drive train departments. Oh and tyres – the two-five-0 eats back tyres like its rider eats burgers. Lots of them, big ones. With cheese!

For the supercross I wanted to trick things up a little – no major blinging, just a little tweak here and a tiny tickle there. Every mod's done for a reason too – mostly for added usability or durability – but there's no need for performance mods as the Honda delivers plenty of poke and just where I like it too (ooh er missus).

First improvement is in the 'bar department. I've got on well with the stock Renthals so far but for the kind of bouncing-bike-down-track abuse my supercross 'skills' involve it's time for a set of Twinwalls – K-Dub bend. The Windham bend bars are more suited for the taller rider and set slightly forward in the Renthal bar-mounts are perfect for my needs.

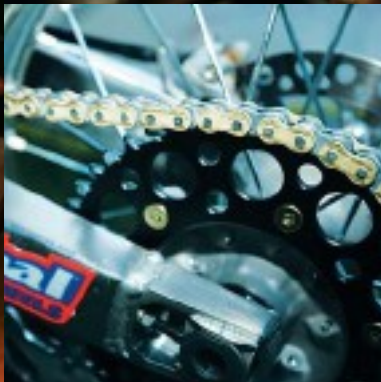
While we're working in the control dept a Wirtz aluminium throttle tube is also fitted before Renthal Dual Compound grips are glued and wired in place. Both control cables are then cleaned and lubed and all the lever pivot points come in for the same treatment too.

Next on the hit-list is the shifter. Again, there's nowt wrong with the stock gear lever but for a big footed buffoon like myself a custom gear lever – in this case Sunline's Hammerhead item (as used by Josh Coppins) – isn't a bad idea, especially seeing as the last thing you wanna be hamming is a gear change when approaching those bad-ass 20ft doubles we see on UK supercross courses.

The Hammerhead has an interchangeable tip that allows you to customise it to match the



There's some red hot SX action going down in the Dawg house!



cornish nasty

WALKER'S BROUGHT DOWN TO EARTH AT THE ST AUSTELL SX

Words by Geoff Walker Photo by Suttu

*Standing on the sidelines at SXs in far flung places such as Paris, Leipzig, San Diego or Anaheim seems to make my mind work in a mysterious way... "I could do that" has sprung to mind a few times but, as little Tommy C will tell you, "Walker's **** at jumpin'!"*

Anyway, the call came from Uncle Airtime Dinham about the resurrection of the supercross down in St Austell, Cornwall. This race was last held five or six years ago and was always a great success in attracting large crowds of holidaymakers and in turn making lots of lovely green stuff for local charities and hospices.

So there I was at the Motoxtreme HQ, preppin' the KX for me to ride a supercross! I've prepped supercross bikes for Huck, TC, Nunny, Mike Brown, Swanny, Robbie Herring and the Sutton Meat but never for myself...

As it happened the prep didn't really take too long as I figured that I didn't deserve the kind of prep I used to do for the pros (I was expecting to take one look at the track and fill my Noycey replica Y-fronts)!

New Pirelli 320 boots back and front were called for plus a sparkly filter to ensure no hesitation on the take-offs as well as the usual gearbox oil change, carb drain and general front to back nut and bolt check. I left the lights and 18 inch 2C wheel in the puppy to keep it real for the enduro and trail rider fraternity and there it was, ready for action.

The track turned out to be perfectly sculpted by the south west racing legend that is Andy Gilbert. A blend of whoops, tables, doubles, triples and a faster outdoor style section had everyone really looking forward to the evening's racing which followed a four-heat qualifying system to determine who went to the Main Event or B final.

I have to admit to the fact that I was pappin' myself but practice went pretty well and I even managed to get both my wheels off the deck! At the same time!

With a lot of banter (and pre-race excuses) between myself, Uncle D, Roscoe and JP it was time for the racing to start.

Heat one went okay. Good start and a steady ride to fourth. Heat two went okay. Good start and a steady ride to fourth. Heat three went okay.

Good start and a steady ride to fourth (you can probably see a pattern emerging here).... I figured if I did two laps at a good speed, jumping everything, all would be groovy as far as making the Main Event.

My plan was working so well I decided to try and up the stakes for heat four to see what would happen. I lined up next to Bryan MacKenzie and thought it would be the best plan to try and nail the holeshot...

What was I thinking? Me and Bryan entered the first turn pretty locked in and I was just starting to feel happy with my good start when some loon decided not to shut off and T-boned me. I flew...oh how I flew! Luckily, we were pretty far gone off the start so I actually did a mid-air fly-by – minus the bike – in front of the entire pack.

Posts, ropes, bikes and spokes flew everywhere. My point of impact with terra firma was about 15 metres from the KX so I hobbled back – a little beaten up – to find a twisted and pretty nailed bike. A DNF was costly in points so I thought I should try and finish the race. The front wheel was absolutely wrecked as it had mated with Bryan's footpeg but, testimony to the strength of the 2C wheel, it stayed together until the end of the moto – pretty unbelievable really considering around 14 spokes had been ripped out!

The wheel was the least of my worries after the race as I felt pretty wrecked. I had qualified for the Main but my night was over. Luckily, Uncle D is blessed with a great missus named Auntie Chloe and she really looked after me with painkillers and antiseptic (shame it wasn't weedkiller and arsenic – Suttu). Cheers Chlo'!

The event raised around 10K for local charities and I would like to thank everyone involved for their hospitality and putting on a great event for some very worthy causes. A big well done to Jody Smyth who took home the big dollars and Bryan Mac for taking second after breaking his big toe earlier in the evening! Tough, tough boy...

I look forward to next year when I may be able to persuade SX Suttu along to sunny Cornwall to bang bars...

breaking news

AND KNEE'S OUT...

There's a bit of bad news for anyone wanting to cheer on Suttu at any of this year's supercross events. The dumbass only went and wadded his knee in a rutty corner so he's been ordered off his bike for a few months by his physiotherapist – and his mother!

Good news is he'll still be appearing at most of the indoor events but only in charge of his camera. Never mind, there's always next year Tanky...

size of your foot. They're also hard wearing – so hard in fact that JC has run the same shift lever for something like two seasons. It's also rumoured he hasn't changed his socks or jocks for nearly as long although dbr can neither confirm nor deny said rumour.

The last little job is to change the gearing – and throw a new chain on there while we're doing it. An extra tooth on the back will help with acceleration out of corners and on the face of jumps without changing the feel of the power delivery too much. Proper supercross specialists may gear their bikes much lower for that extra punch – I'm not, so I won't.

And that's pretty much that. A good check over – the kind I do before every ride – and a wee polish should see us right for the start of the supercross season at Sheffield on October 22... Now I just need to work on the fitness levels.

"Tubby! Are you crazy?" asked the hot hard-bodied blonde on the treadmill next to me as I filled her in on my planned SX exploits. "Don't you remember what happened last time? You'll end up on your fat ass again..."



NICE PAIR!

Honda unleash their '06 CRFX woods weapons at Lierop – and they're a couple of peaches!

Words by Geoff Walker Photos by rayarcher.com

*Wakker steps it
up on the 450X
at Lierop*





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The 450X is, to quote Wakker, "fun to ride without kicking the **** out of you"



MX-inspired suspension set-up makes the 250X a great off-road weapon

"Are you ready for the European '06 Honda launch Paddy?"

"Eh? When and where?"

"You leave for Holland in two days for the test at Lierop."

"I'm on it – cheers for the short notice."

"Shut it Wakker!"

NICE, THAT'S all I'll say. But the chance to ride the '06 CRF250 and 450Xs is a chance not to be missed...

The going at Lierop is sand. Deep sand. Very deep sand indeed! You get the picture. The good thing about the Lierop site for my side of the test was that the track is set in some really nice woods so I could go and play in the trees for hours and then throw in the odd lap on the GP circuit when I felt like punishing myself.

The '06 CRF 250X may look pretty much the same as the '05 model but as always the Honda engineers have been doing their homework to tweak this off-road tiddler of note. The what's new list includes a lot of weight reduction work to help with an already great handling package.

The rear end is lightened by way of a new lighter hub, swingarm and rear damper body. These changes give the bike a more positive feeling in the turns out on the trails and tracks. Another feature to help with the turning and balance of the bike is the new front axle

placement – the same that's used on the CRF250R. This change is made to compliment the changes to the rear of the bike and to help improve the bike as a complete package.

With the changes made it's clear that Honda have been pretty happy with the previous edition of the CRF250X as they've not wanted to make any drastic alterations to the tiddler in their enduro range.

I was really looking forward to getting my hands on the 250 as all two-fiddy four-poppers love to be abused and the Dutch sand was the ideal place to really give the wee CRF-X a rippin'.

As always with Honda the seating position is just about spot on. Somehow they manage to make a bike which is comfortable for tall and short riders. This is good.

Another thing that's good is the electric start. It's what dreams are made of and the Honda guys have definitely got it right in this department. I've never actually heard of anyone who's had a problem with the CRX's leccy start which is not always the case with the current range of enduro bikes on the market.

With the motor running and the 'bars and levers set, it was off for another mini adventure. This bike is made for all types of tracks and trails so I thought I would get out and do a few laps around the GP circuit before

heading off into the woods.

The sand on the track is bottomless and the 250X did good just to make it around – it really is that deep! The motor on the bike is okay. Just okay. It does nothing exceptionally well, it just does everything at an average level which is to be expected as the exhaust system is pretty restrictive and that can really be felt when on a power-sapping surface. But the motor lacks nothing straight off the bottom and the initial power will give you excellent traction in all trail situations.

The handling is the department where the CRF250X really holds its own. The fork and shock are set up to be pretty close to the full MX model and this really inspires a lot of confidence in the ride. You really could ride this bike all day and not get too tired to have fun. Both ends were just a fraction too soft for my 15 stone frame but with a spring change and a little tweaking I could make the boingers spot on (or you could always eat less pies – SL).

The bike just loved low speed playing in the woods as you can throw the puppy around like a toy and take it wherever you feel like. Pivot turns and fallen trees can be tackled with confidence as the controls are light enough for single finger use so you keep a positive grip on the bars.

All said and done, the '06 CRF250X is a

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.. SOME THINGS STAY THE SAME**



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The 450's a blast. I could end the test there. Four-fiddy four-stroke enduro bikes rock. It's pretty simple. Ample power, not too heavy and with a meaty feel to the whole set up. These bikes are made for riders who need that little bit extra – you know where I'm coming from!

The CRF450X delivers a smooth, manageable punch from the moment you roll the throttle on. There is more than ample power all the way through the rev range to keep just about every rider on the planet smiling. I really do like the power on the 450X and this was compounded after I had a few laps on the 450R model. The power on that puppy is smooth but pretty brutal and this made me appreciate the

work the Japanese engineers have put into the 450X motor to make it fun to ride without kicking the **** out of you on the trails. Every situation I put the bike into was positively dealt with by the motor as there were no dips in the power to cause any stress.

The negative point with the bike is the slightly heavy feel but this is off-set by a very balanced chassis set-up. The bike I tested at the initial '05 launch had a hard feeling to the forks but on this test that feeling – helped by the fact that we were in deep sand – had disappeared. Even when trailing through the woods the front to rear chassis balance felt good and at no time did I bottom the units in a nasty fashion.

After riding the 250X the controls are going to feel heavier but the clutch did have a pretty

heavy feel to it – with all the extra power the clutch must run heavier springs. There are mods to make the cable-operated clutch a little lighter and I would be going down this road with the 450X if I was the proud owner of one.

The gearbox on the 450X (as with the 250X) works smoothly and positive shifting is always a good thing – no missed gears and that was with some sparkly new boots on!

The bike is built well and attention to detail in all departments is excellent as Honda have gone for the build-it-strong approach. That's the feeling you get from this bike – the power inspires confidence, the chassis is balanced and the whole bike is simply well put together. All-in-all the CRF450X is a great all-rounder for average riders up to top international stars.



specifications

CRF250X

Capacity:	249.4cc
Bore and stroke:	78mm x 52.2mm
Transmission:	Five-speed
Carburettor:	37mm Keihin FCR
Front suspension:	Showa fork (280mm travel)
Rear suspension:	Showa shock (315mm travel)
Front brake:	240mm disc
Rear brake:	240mm disc
Wheelbase:	1481mm
Seat height:	958mm
Dry weight:	102kg



specifications

CRF450X

Capacity:	449cc
Bore and stroke:	96mm x 62mm
Transmission:	Five-speed
Carburettor:	40mm Keihin FCR
Front suspension:	Kayaba fork (315mm travel)
Rear suspension:	Kayaba shock (315mm travel)
Front brake:	240mm disc
Rear brake:	240mm disc
Wheelbase:	1478mm
Seat height:	963mm
Dry weight:	115.7kg



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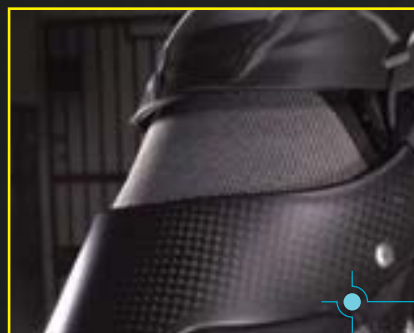
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Husqvarna

Are these '06 Husqvarnas spicy meatballs or do they pack less punch than an aged Abba record?

Words by Tony Marshall Photos by Massimo Zanzani

THE BIGGEST visible change to the zero-six Huskys is the colour but the white and red scheme is nothing new – some of you might remember Heikki Mikkola clinching the 1976 500cc world championship on a similarly (but Swedish built) coloured machine.

Of course, you'd have probably been viewing in black and white back then so maybe you can't recall such a thing...

It's not just the colour that's changed for '06 though. The electric-starters are gone but not forgotten on the four-strokes, the 250 two-smoker has been sacked off completely and the entire range gets new and improved brakes and an Ohlins rear shock replaces the Sachs unit of old.

Even though they've made a few modifications to the '06 125 it doesn't feel too different to this year's bike. Admittedly, even though we're on the same circuit as last year's test the weather's a lot better so conditions are more favourable.

Husqvarna have finally lost what I'd best describe as the 'European' feel and are pretty much in line with the Japanese manufacturers when it comes to things like the riding position and the 125 definitely feels like it's come out of Japan.

The first thing I noticed was when I started the 125 was it felt like it had quite low compression so with my many year's of racing experience I was expecting a top-end bike out on the track.

As I thought, it didn't have too much bottom to mid-range but there was lots of top. This meant I had to be very precise with things like gear changing and selection in certain turns and also landing from some jumps because the motor would die on hard landings. I also felt I was pulling a gear lower in some turns than I would on another 125. I wouldn't say it was slower than other 125s on the market but I did have to really work the gearbox to get the most from the motor.

The riding position is very comfortable and the suspension on the 125 feels very stable – I went a little harder on the compression at the rear and left the front forks as they came from the factory. Husqvarna are running Ohlins at the rear now – they used to run Sachs. There's not a lot of difference between the two but Ohlins is a more recognisable brand and should help with sales.

For 2006 they've done away with the 250cc two-stroke so after testing the 125 it was straight onto the four-strokes. I was looking forward to getting on the 250 thumper. It's a little like the 125 in that you need to use the gearbox a lot and keep your foot busy.

There's no major hard-hitting powerband anywhere – it's reasonably smooth. But I'd like to have seen a bit more power coming out of the engine. Husqvarna are now running to the 96db limit and this could make a difference.

The rev limiter stops, I think, at 12,000 and I reckon that's a little too early – just as you think the bike's starting to get going the rev limiter cuts in and holds it back. I'm guessing the reason for this is to make the engine more reliable and durable.

We made pretty similar adjustments to the rear suspension of the 250F as we had with the 125, going a little harder on compression. We also went for a little more free sag to allow the bike to ride a bit lower at the back.

The Huskys run Marzocchi front forks –



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Left: Despite feeling uncomfortable on some 450 four-strokes, Tony was right at home on the TC450

Below: The '06 125 is a top-end machine so gear changing and selection is vital



I struggled with the front at the beginning of the day but after a while I got a better feel for the front end on all the bikes. There was no headshake or anything like that, I just felt that the front end felt as though it wanted to push out a bit but this could be down to me taking a bit of time to adapt to the new bikes.

The 250 four-stroke runs the same controls as the other models in the range. At the beginning of the day the brakes on some of the bikes felt a bit spongy but that was due to the pads and discs not sitting square – this was corrected once the bikes had been out a few times. And I've never ever had any problems with Brembo brakes.

The 450 was one of the first bikes I threw

my leg over at the test and it's the one I enjoyed riding the most. It's got to be one of the easiest 450 four-strokes I've ever ridden due to the power. It's so tractable – useable and controllable with no aggressive hit. The bigger bikes don't usually suit me too much but the power delivery really suited my riding style and I was genuinely surprised how much I enjoyed riding this bike.

I had to stiffen the front end up which was another surprise – landing from the bigger jumps it felt like metal on metal – but the rear end was fine and worked well with the front once I'd made the changes.

The biggest advantage on this track for the 450 was the usable power – maybe in deep

sand I'd have needed a bit more grunt but on this track it was great.

Out of the gate I was pulling second gear starts real easy but there was so much grip it called for a really precise technique.

The 510 really is not suited for me. I didn't feel comfortable with the weight or power but this reflects bikes of this size, not the Husqvarna. It didn't feel as stable as the 450 – especially down some of the hills where you kinda G-out at the bottom. But a bigger rider would probably feel a lot more at home than I did. Treat this one with respect – take too many liberties and you could easily find yourself on your arse.



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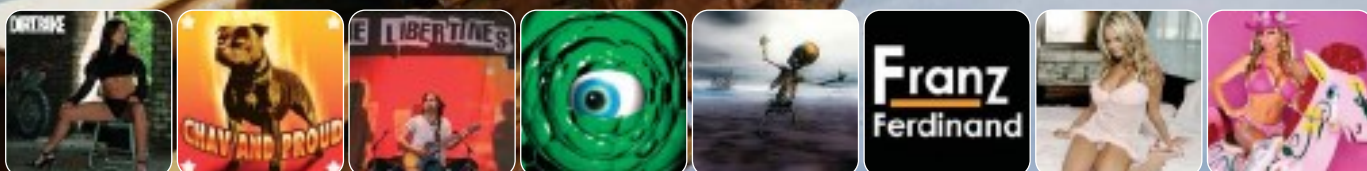
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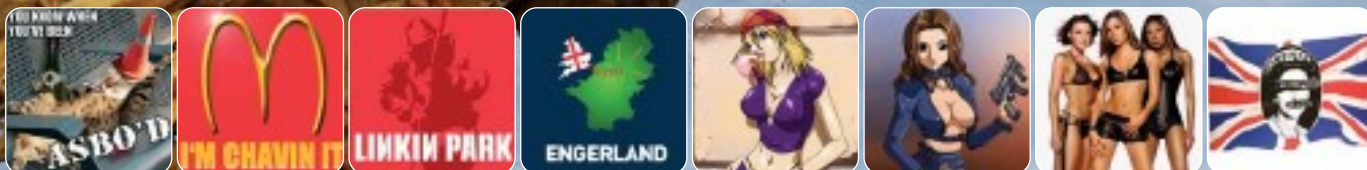
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specifications

CR125

Capacity:	124.82cc
Bore and stroke:	54mm x 54.5mm
Transmission:	Six-speed
Carburettor:	Mikuni TMX38
Front suspension:	45mm Marzocchi
Rear suspension:	Ohlins
Front brake:	260mm disc
Rear brake:	240mm disc
Wheelbase:	1460mm
Seat height:	990mm
Dry weight:	94.8kg



specifications

TC450

Capacity:	449cc
Bore and stroke:	97mm x 60.76mm
Transmission:	Five-speed
Carburettor:	Keihin 41mm
Front suspension:	50mm Marzocchi
Rear suspension:	Ohlins
Front brake:	260mm disc
Rear brake:	240mm disc
Wheelbase:	1472mm
Seat height:	980mm
Dry weight:	106.5kg



specifications

TC250

Capacity:	249.5cc
Bore and stroke:	76mm x 55mm
Transmission:	Five-speed
Carburettor:	Keihin 37mm
Front suspension:	50mm Marzocchi
Rear suspension:	Ohlins
Front brake:	260mm disc
Rear brake:	240mm disc
Wheelbase:	1485mm
Seat height:	970mm
Dry weight:	101.2kg



specifications

TC510

Capacity:	501cc
Bore and stroke:	97mm x 67.8mm
Transmission:	Five-speed
Carburettor:	Keihin 41mm
Front suspension:	50mm Marzocchi
Rear suspension:	Ohlins
Front brake:	260mm disc
Rear brake:	240mm disc
Wheelbase:	1472mm
Seat height:	980mm
Dry weight:	111kg



Husqvarna



If you like 250cc Huskies then next year you'll have to make do with a four-popper - the two-stroke's been dropped from the range

The GP season signs off in Ulster where Tyla completes his comeback hat-trick and Stefan goes out on top

Words by Alex Hodgkinson

DEAD RACE – are you joking? There are no titles at stake at Desertmartin but the GP premiere at Porter's Pit is a cracker as Stefano and BT go at it for the last time in MX1, the KTMs show what might have been as Styla leads an orange sweep to complete his comeback hat-trick and the GP boys kick Mike Alessi's ass!

With 16 GPs behind them and only a week to the Nations the boys could be forgiven for a little slacking but the Ulster track is just too enthralling for anyone to get bored.

"It's so fast that I'm over-jumping everything," reckons Billy Mac after two practice sessions around the shortened helter-skelter which has been given the Youthstream treatment by Johnny D and Greg Atkins.

"It'll rough up before tomorrow," warns team-mate Gordy but the Ulster hero has other worries. "I came here pumped up to do well but the throttle struck on the first lap of training. And the bike feels different every time I get on it – I just don't have any confidence to race it. I'm sure it's not me, you can't forget how to ride that quickly!"

If it's any consolation, Gordy is fastest Irish qualifier but brake problems add to his misery on race day and teenage team-mate Martin Barr is top homeboy with a brace of 19ths to his name.

James Noble puts himself back into contention for the MX1 #7 ranking in race one but waves goodbye to any hopes when he rams a fallen Gundersen and then falls alone in the first minute of race two.

Billy and Carl go head-to-head in search of sixth in MX2 and it is the Scot who comes out on top, despite feeling rougher than rough after eating something wrong. Nunny has it pinned until he crashes out.

Wayne Smith and Tommy Searle rip up the MX2 midfield, Pascal Leuret has a startling introduction to Multitek power and Swanny continues his late season surge with a fourth in moto two.

© Alex Hodgkinson



Cairolì gets an elbow in front of Rattray and De Rouver and Leok opt for an Alessi sandwich at the start of the second MX2 moto

MX1 moto two and Pichon leads the chase after Townley



© Alex Hodgkinson

Mikey prepares to be gobbled up by Styla





Everts closes in on Coppins



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But it's the 'visitors' who thrill the Desertmartin crowd. Josh sets the early pace in the MX1 opener and BT gives it everything but Everts is eventually supreme, even pulling back eight seconds on the Kiwi teenager in race two before surging home to win by 20 seconds plus. He needs the time for a quick-change act, ripping off his helmet and donning a t-shirt to join Styla, Sharky and more of BT's mates as they give him a regal surprise farewell to GP racing.

The 20-year-old is fighting back the tears as he sets off on his new adventure. "It was unreal. The crowd was clapping me all round the last lap as well. I'll miss everyone!"

Already on Friday Styla has presented Ben with a personal souvenir of their five years together on the GP trail – first with Vangani and then with the KTM factory – and the South African is hot to finally win that MX2 title after completing his hat-trick of victories in the final three GPs on his comeback from injury.

As in Lierop he loses the first moto to Marc De Reuver but both are more interested in kicking Alessi's ass. The 17-year-old US hotshot had been mouthing off before racing and has thoroughly got up everyone's nose in the orange corner. Marc even turns round after passing Mikey for the lead in the opener and beckons him to try to follow. "I waved him to come with me but he couldn't. I think we proved how strong our series is, eh?"

Mikey's final act is a scuffle with David Philippaerts in the pits after race two. "I was in the corner, there was nowhere for him to go and he ran straight into my thigh," says the Italian. "Then after the race he comes and starts yelling it was my fault. He's crazy!"



Noble narrowly fails to grab the MX1 #7 plate



De Reuver smokes everyone in the opening MX2 moto

quote unquote

IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

"I was absolutely shattered after 30 minutes in both motos but it's the first time I've ridden in a race that long at that speed so that was to be expected. The experience was wonderful and now I want more."

Martin Barr

"I could have taken the easy way out and gone for MX1 but I enjoy riding the 125 much more and I achieved my aim for the weekend when I qualified – it was just like racing in the Ulster championship, doing it on the last lap. But racing here is no training for races like this and I was soon trailed off in both motos but once I got lapped I was surprised how I could pick up the pace of some of the boys just behind the leaders."

Phil McCullough

"The first race was pretty good – I got a bad start but came through well and got to 14th pushing every lap. Some of the guys were getting knackered but I was still going for it and putting in consistent laps. In the second I was in 12th and was about to pass Guarneri when he rolled a jump, I hit him and we both went

down. I hurt my shoulder and wrist but got back up and managed to get 18th. I'm happy with the way I rode but not the result."

Tommy Searle

"I thought I was safely ahead of Barragan in race one. The outside line in the final turn was the fastest and he had been following me through it but he jumped to the inside at the last minute and surprised me. Before I could react, he had cut across me. In the second race Gundersen fell right in front of me on the first lap and then I crashed on my own."

James Noble

"That was just the result I needed after being out all summer. I got tired at the end of both races but I kept pushing on."

Neville Bradshaw

"I've struggled all season so I couldn't expect anything spectacular. But it was a thrill just to take part, I finished both motos and had fun – that's what counts."

Richard McKeown

"I'm really happy that I beat Mike and I beat him straight up, he cannot give any complaints. He took

the holeshot and I passed him for the win. The second heat my start was not so good and I made a small crash and had to restart the bike. I was quite mad and came from 21st to third. People cannot understand that I am really pissed off after the race – I thought I was the strongest today so I should have won."

Marc De Reuver

"In the second I was doing okay until I started getting lapped – I've seen Everts shouting at loads of people this year and I didn't want to be the one who got in his way – so I started moving over and losing touch. In the first I was having an awesome race with Dobes for 13 or 14 laps then I moved over for the leaders but he didn't and pulled about 30 seconds on me in two laps. It sucks out there on a two-stroke..."

Bryan MacKenzie

"I've won three races in a row now coming back from my injury so I'm really happy. Having Mike Alessi here today made me want it a little bit more – everyone thinks that the American riders are so much better but today we've shown that's not true and next weekend I'm racing Tedesco and I'm pretty confident that I'll beat him also."

Tyla Rattray

Unfair advantage?

Well, you can see the competition's point of view

It's going to become a familiar sight to Honda's rivals in next year's MX2 championships around the world - the beautiful back end of the all-new, dual-exhaust 2006 Honda CRF250R. But it's not just the back end that's been improved. The new exhaust system centralises mass and contributes

to a sharper power delivery and more responsive handling. And, with more power and low-end torque, the Unicam four-stroke engine thumps the CRF250R out of corners so strongly that, if you're not on one next year, that view below may just get smaller and smaller.

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Townley ends his GP career with second in Ireland

results

MX1

1 Stefan Everts	(B – Yamaha)	25+25=50
2 Ben Townley	(NZ – KTM)	22+22=44
3 Josh Coppins	(NZ – Honda)	20+18=38
4 Steve Ramon	(B – KTM)	15+20=35
5 Tanel Leok	(Est – Kawasaki)	18+13=31
6 Kevin Strijbos	(B – Suzuki)	14+16=30
7 Mickael Pichon	(F – Honda)	16+14=30
8 Jonathan Barragan	(E – KTM)	13+15=28
9 James Noble	(GB – Honda)	12+8=20
10 Brian Jorgensen	(DK – Yamaha)	8+11=19
16 Yoshi Atsuta	(J – Suzuki)	0+9=9
17 Neville Bradshaw	(SA – Suzuki)	4+5=9
23 Martin Barr	(GB – Yamaha)	2+2=4
24 Bryan MacKenzie	(GB – Kawasaki)	0+1=1
25 Gordon Crockard	(GB – Yamaha)	1+0=1

MX2

1 Tyla Ratray	(SA – KTM)	22+25=47
2 Marc De Reuver	(NL – KTM)	25+20=45
3 Aigar Leok	(Est – KTM)	15+22=37
4 Alessio Chiodi	(I – Yamaha)	10+15=25
5 Jeff Alessi	(US – KTM)	8+16=24
6 Billy MacKenzie	(GB – Yamaha)	13+11=24
7 Andrew McFarlane	(Aus – Yamaha)	14+10=24
8 Mike Alessi	(US – KTM)	20+4=24
9 Gareth Swanepoel	(SA – Kawasaki)	2+18=20
10 Antonio Cairoli	(I – Yamaha)	16+2=18
17 Wayne Smith	(GB – Honda)	4+7=11
18 Carl Nunn	(GB – KTM)	11+0=11
19 Tommy Searle	(GB – Kawasaki)	7+3=10

FINAL SERIES STANDINGS

MX1

1 Everts 721 points, 2 Coppins 652, 3 Townley 589, 4 Ramon 500, 5 Pichon 476, 6 Smets 385, 7 Barragan 312, 8 Leuret 306, 9 De Dycker 303, 10 Noble 302...14 Atsuta 218...19 Cooper 156...22 Hucklebridge 117...28 Crockard 32...36 Bradshaw 12...52 Barr 4...56 Phillips 3...59 Burnham 2...63 Jones 2, 64 Bryan MacKenzie 1

MX2

1 Cairoli 567, 2 McFarlane 518, 3 Chiodi 504, 4 Philippaerts 468, 5 Pourcel 372, 6 MacKenzie 356, 7 Melotte 352, 8 Nunn 343, 9 Sword 310, 10 Goncalves 301...21 Swanepoel 126, 22 Church 122...27 Eggens 94...29 Dougan 54, 30 Smith 32, 31 Simpson 29...40 Searle 19

LOONEY DUNES!

Stupid is as stupid does – only in this case substitute ‘Sutty’ for ‘Stupid’ and you won’t go far wrong...

Words by Sutty Photos by Ray Chuss

THREE HOURS! That’s how long it takes to get from sunny Morecambe to sunny Weston-super-Mare (if you’re travelling at warp factor one) and it’s also the race distance of Britain’s premier beach blast – the rather obviously named Weston Beach Race.

This year’s eagerly awaited edition has been brought forward a few weeks due to tides and things and unfortunately falls the week before the final round of the closely contested Maxxis British motocross champs which keeps most of Britain’s finest MXers away. But an otherwise healthy entry of 900-odd – and some not so odd – riders plan to be on the startline for the main race. This year I’ll be one of those riders...

Of course, it wasn’t meant to happen this way. I’d originally planned to have a weekend off completely away from bikes and dirt but when my best mate Eddie Holmes asked me to help him out in the pits I couldn’t really say no.

Saying no is a major problem for me – I just can’t do it. “Sutty, do you want owt from the pie shop?” is a regular question I face while working in the depths of the **dbt** dungeon and try as I might I just can’t say the N word. Another that frequently pops up is “Sutty, how do you fancy doing another 20 hours unpaid overtime this week?” Somehow, even though my mind thinks nooooo my mouth says, “yeah, sure, I’d love to”.

And that’s exactly what slipped out when Gareth Hockey – using Sophie F as a medium – asked me if I fancied doing the beach race on one of his bikes after an invited American managed to miss his flight. Trouble was it was 9pm on Saturday night and I was already over halfway to Weston!

To make matters worse I didn’t have anything with me but casual clothes and my toothbrush. Gareth reckoned it wouldn’t be a problem though and he’d be able to sort me out with everything I’d need. It was on – I was doing the beach race.

While the 85cc racers did their bit to entertain I was doing my bit to blag everything I needed. Technology in Motion came forth with some CTi Morph braces, Rockey at Ray Hockey Racing sorted me out with everything else – including his own personal boots – while Drew

Smith and Nigel Meredith sorted me out a couple of extra pairs of goggles just in case I needed them.

Anyway, back to the race. At around a quarter-past midday it kicks off. Kinda. I and around three-quarters of the pack aren’t even on the startline when someone decides to just set off and instigate what’s probably the crappiest start in the history of British beach racing.

It’s Lancastrian Steve Bunnell who leads the pack into the first corner on his ally-framed CR500 with Tyla Ratray, Jean-Claude Mousse and Jordan Rose all in tow but it’s Ratray and Mousse who come out with the lead as Bunnell out-brakes himself and goes way wide.

Meanwhile, I’m mired mid-pack in a sea of spray but the power of the borrowed YZF450 is pulling me through the pack. A fairly steady opening lap that sees me avoid most of the jams puts me somewhere in the top 30 – a position which I’m comfortably holding before going over the ‘bars on lap three and losing a stack of time as I try and restart the hot motor.

During the first 60 minutes Ratray makes a vital error. As the marshals direct the traffic around a dune to avoid an injured rider Tyla simply blasts over the top – this mistake costs Ratray dearly as he’s docked a lap and slips down to 68th spot. That must be the first time in Weston history a rider has been docked a lap for not cutting the course. Weird!

At the end of the first hour it’s O’Neal Yamaha’s Brad Anderson who’s got a lead of around 30 seconds over Paul Edmondson and early pace-setter Jordan Rose who’ve all just about scraped in six laps with two hours left on the clock. Around five minutes later I notch up my fifth lap which is a slow one as I’ve pitted for gas and half a bottle of Evian – at this point I’m running 73rd and all is well.

The next hour is a bit tougher as the course cuts up. Paul Eddy uses this to his advantage and makes a move past Ando into the lead. Rose blows a head gasket on his 450 Honda and Welsh lad Jason Thomas moves his CRF into third. A transponder glitch elevates Tim Foreman into fourth when it mistakenly notches off two laps instead of one and gifts him



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Eddy finally gets the Weston win after years of trying

results

SOLO

1	Paul Edmondson	(HRFE Honda)	18 laps
2	Brad Anderson	(O'Neal Yamaha)	18
3	Jason Thomas	(Innovate Honda)	18
4	Timotei Polisek	(Honda)	17
5	Edward Jones	(KTM)	17
6	Tim Foreman	(KTM)	16
7	Paul Whibley	(Gas Gas)	16
8	Rob Meek	(Bolddog Honda)	16
9	Darren Wheeler	(Stevens Yamaha)	16
10	Rick Du-Feu	(DK Off Road Yamaha)	16

QUAD

1	Paul Winrow	(HM Plant Honda)	17 laps
2	Jason MacBeth	(HM Plant Honda)	17
3	Dana Creech	(H-Bomb Honda)	17

SIDECAR

1	Jon and David Sheard	(Honda)	14 laps
2	M Chapman/W Davey	(Martins/Rayburn KTM)	14
3	P Pelling/C Burt	(Centriplant Husqvarna)	13

Goose-steppin', panic-revvin' – it can only be Suttly!



the fastest lap of the race – 0.01 seconds.

It's not been a desperately bad hour for me but I've still slipped seven places and the clutch is starting to play up as I can't keep any free play in the cable. As Steve – my top tech for the day – refuels the Yamaha I slacken off the cable a little more but I know I'm gonna have to be careful if I'm going to make the finish in another hour or so.

This plan all seems well and fine until I get to the deep ruts in the black sand section. A rider cross-ruts in front of me and goes down causing me to lose all momentum. In the struggle to get out of the gloop I finally kill the clutch – no amount of cable adjustment is gonna help me now but the recovery trailer sure can and a lift back to base beats pushing over 100 kilos of Iwata's finest metal.

The action on track is a tad more exciting than my trailer ride as Edmondson still has the slightest of leads over bad Brad who's pushing like a demon in the increasingly difficult going. Thomas is still third as Frenchman Timotei Polisek and Ed Jones round out the top five.

In the pits the Hockey boys are desperately doing their thing to get the YZF moving again but it's not happening and eight completed laps will stay as my final total. With nowt else to do I head back to the van to get changed and then watch the last laps of the race unfold.

And what a final few minutes they are too as Brad keeps the pressure on Eddy right to the flag making it one of the most exciting finishes in Weston history. Incredibly, it's Eddy's first win at the event in 20 years of trying!

"It's a great feeling to have finally won the event," reckons Eddy. "I first finished second to Dave Thorpe back in '88 and again last year I was the runner-up to Stefan Everts so to have won is awesome. I can't believe how well the race went for me – I was really lucky and didn't have any big crashes or bike problems. In fact my bike ran perfectly all race and never missed a beat."



Cheers m'dears

A MASSIVE THANKS GOES OUT TO...

...Gregg Godfrey for not getting his American ass over to merrye olde England, Sophie Lerguson just for being Sophie Lerguson, Gareth (Harry) Hockey for promoting a top-notch event and also allowing me to borrow his bike, kit and the services of some of his finest friends and co-workers.

Those kind people included Adrian 'conrod-through-cases' Deeley, Rocky the boot lending legend, Bob Lewis, Dainty, Steve my tip-top refuelling technician, Cristina the liquid refreshment providing princess and let's not forget Nick who prepped the puppy prior to the race. Darren from Technology in Motion helped me walk away safely after loaning me a pair of CTI Morph braces for the day while Drew Smith and Nigel Meredith provided me with extra goggles and tear-offs. The recovery guys are worth a mention too as they saved me an hour-long push back down the beach when the clutch burned out.

Finally, I'd like to thank Steve McQueen for inspiring me with his famous 'racing is life, everything else is just waiting' line and Tony Wackabonie for lending me dry Simpsons socks for the drive home.

Cheers guys and gals!

SEVENTH HEAVEN!

Carl Nunn wraps up the MX2 title a round early while Josh Coppins pulls ahead in MX1

Words and photos by Sully

IF IT'S tantalisingly tasty fresh fish and chips you're after then Whitby's the place (or should that be plaice?) to be. And it's not just the fish that takes a battering round these parts as three solid day's worth of rain turns the Skelder Bank circuit into a bit of a mudder as the Maxxis British motocross championships come to town.

But luckily – after everyone's eventually towed in – the circuit that's just a heartbeat away from the fictional village of Aidensfield (geddit?) holds up to a full day's racing. And what a day of racing it is!

MX2 championship leader Carl Nunn comes into Whitby with a whopping lead over the injured – and absent – Tom Church and the very much on-form Billy MacKenzie. But with Carl planning on playing it safe to make sure he wraps up the title it's up to Molson Kawasaki's South African import Gareth Swanepoel to lock bars with Billy.

KRM Honda's Scott Probert grabs the holeshot in moto one but Billy's through into the lead before too long while Nunny's got his hands full battling with Brad Anderson before Swanepoel blitzes them both and takes off after Billy.

As the laps progress and the leaders run into the lapped riders – sometimes literally – Swanny manages to close Billy's lead down before making a move, then pulling a gap on MacKenzie before Billy tangles big-time with a lapper and loses 30-odd seconds before getting going again.

Luckily for Billy, Nunny's been on cruise control since disposing of Ando for third place and the Scotsman's second is safe while Swanepoel takes his maiden Maxxis victory.

Moto two is much the same although this time Nunny gets the start and holds the lead until Billy and Swanny work their way through to the front on lap two. From there on in it's a high-pressure game of cat and mouse as the

leading pair battle through the ruts and back-markers right the way to the flag with MacKenzie holding a slight lead throughout. Billy takes the overall with a 2-1, Swanny's second on 1-2 and Nunny's crowned the new champ with his 3-3.

The MX1 title chase is a whole lot tighter coming into Whitby as local lad James Noble leads Josh Coppins by three points and Paul Cooper by a single digit. James is hoping to use local knowledge to beat back his championship chasers while t'other local lad – Jordan Rose – is looking to improve on his points haul after jumping ship from TM to Honda power.

As the gate drops for moto one it's Cooper who leads from Rose. Bryan MacKenzie's off to a flyer on the two-smoke Kawasaki and Noble's right up there in the hunt too while Coppins is mired in the mid-pack.

As Coops keeps his cool in the lead Rose is holding on to second while Noble chases hard – but it all changes on lap five. JR slips off the Meredith Honda which helps Coppins leapfrog from fourth to first in the space of a lap as he takes advantage of JR's mistake then does both Coops and Noble up the inside of a slippery left-hander.

It takes James another lap to pass Paul then the Whitby warrior latches on to Josh's wake and keeps the Kiwi within reach until the finish but there's no beating the CAS Honda superstar in this race.

Moto two is a bit of a bore in comparison. By the end of lap one Coppins is in front and that's pretty much that. Noble eventually pulls through to second – aided and abetted by a Jordan Rose bail out – while Cooper beats off Mark Jones for the final podium spot.

With just one round remaining at Matchams Park there's everything to play for as Coppins leads by a measly three points over Noble while Coops is still hanging in there a further five points back.

Carl Nunn

MX2 WHITBY 3-3

"It's been a long day and I just wanted it to end quickly! I knew that to win this championship would be tough and I'd have to stay fit and healthy over many months. I am really happy with how I kept my form up through the series and I want to give a big thank you to my team, my mechanics, my family and my sponsors – they all made this happen for me and I really appreciate it."



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► Gareth Swanepoel

MX2 WHITBY 1-2

"It was a real good day and I enjoyed the track. We've had a few mud races this year and I've had to learn to cope with these conditions – I do a lot of sand riding in Belgium and I guess that helps."

"I've won a couple of German championships before but this result today is my best in Britain and it feels really good. My team has been right behind me all year despite a shoulder injury and I'd like to thank them for that."



▼ Billy MacKenzie

MX2 WHITBY 2-1

"It was a tough second race. I've not been feeling too well this weekend but I was still riding okay. Gareth [Swanepoel] really upped the pace and I really had to ride my hardest and focus on good lap times. I'm happy that I've won the overall for once."



► Yoshi Atsuta

MX1 WHITBY 4-6

"I had a good start in the first moto but I wasn't able to get a good line in the first corner and lost a few positions. We had some problems with the engine and the jetting was wrong so I was struggling to ride."

"In the second race the bike was fine but my start was really bad! I crashed twice and found it hard to come back because of the big gaps between the riders. The results were not good today but that second race was very enjoyable."



Coops comes into Whitby still suffering the physical effects of a mystery illness. Even though a pair of thirds on the day is good going for the former champ even Paul himself admits "Josh and James are going to have to have some bad luck at Matchams if I'm going to win the title".



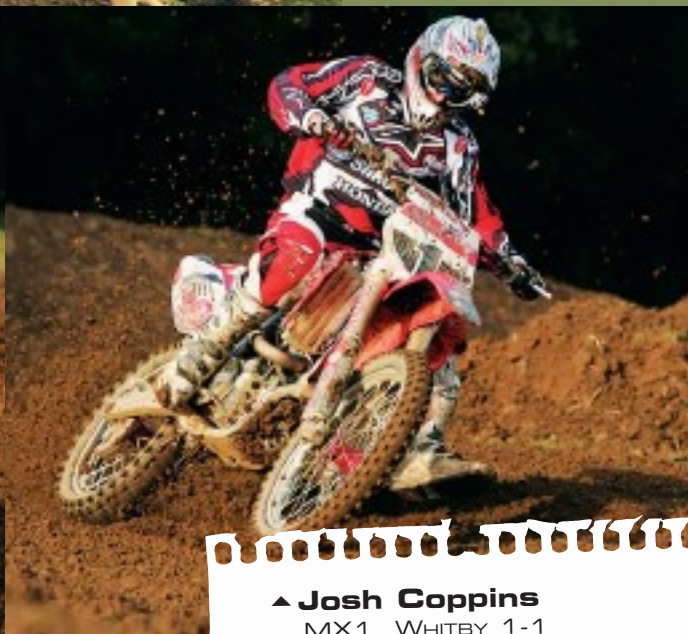
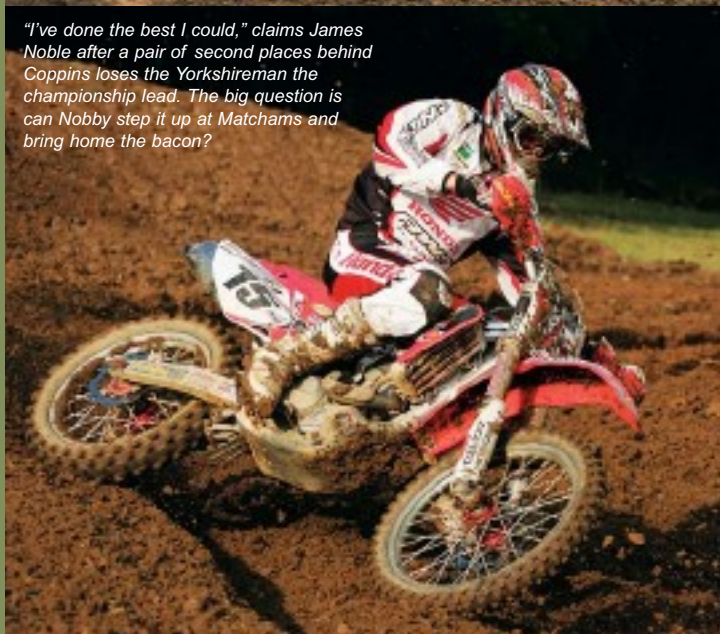
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"I've done the best I could," claims James Noble after a pair of second places behind Coppins loses the Yorkshireman the championship lead. The big question is can Nobby step it up at Matchams and bring home the bacon?



◀ Tommy Searle

MX2 WHITBY 8-10

"Race one didn't go to plan as I got caught up in the first lap carnage. I was way back in 37th but I battled on to get into the eighth – I was really pleased with my effort and determination for the whole 30-minute moto. "Race two was kinda the same. I was hit hard and went down on the first lap – my clutch lever was bent so I went into the pits to get it sorted. By the time I got going I was half-a-lap down. I was so far behind I couldn't see anyone but I was putting in some blistering lap times that only the GP regulars – Mackenzie, Nunn and Swanepoel – were beating. I finished 10th but it could have been so much better."

results - round seven

MX1

1	Josh Coppins	(CAS Honda)	30+30=60
2	James Noble	(RWJ Honda)	27+27=54
3	Paul Cooper	(Multitek Honda)	25+25=50
4	Mark Jones	(EA/dirtbikestore.com KTM)	21+23=44
5	Yoshi Atsuta	(Motovision Suzuki)	23+19=42
6	Neville Bradshaw	(Motovision Suzuki)	17+21=38
7	Martin Barr	(Bike It Dixon Yamaha)	15+17=32
8	Jody Smyth	(Innovate Honda)	13+11=24
9	Gordon Crockard	(Bike It Dixon Yamaha)	10+13=23
10	David Campbell	(Suzuki)	11+8=19

MX2

1	Billy MacKenzie	(Bike It Dixon Yamaha)	27+30=57
2	Gareth Swanepoel	(Molson Kawasaki)	30+27=57
3	Carl Nunn	(Champ KTM)	25+25=50
4	Wayne Smith	(Innovate Honda)	21+23=44
5	Stuart Flockhart	(Flockhartmx.com Honda)	13+19=32
6	David Willet	(Honda)	10+17=27
7	Tommy Searle	(Molson Kawasaki)	15+11=26
8	Lewis Gregory	(Hooper Suzuki)	4+21=25
9	Danny Smyth	(Innovate Honda)	11+13=24
10	Brad Anderson	(O'Neal Yamaha)	23+0=23

SERIES STANDINGS

MX1

1 Coppins 354 points, 2 Noble 351, 3 Cooper 346, 4 Atsuta 294, 5 Vehvilainen 246, 6 Bradshaw 219, 7 Jones 214, 8 Phillips 171, 9 Hucklebridge 144, 10 Smyth 122

MX2

1 Nunn 390 points (champion), 2 MacKenzie 310, 3 Church 292, 4 Smith 286, 5 Anderson 227, 6 Searle 221, 8 Dougan 153, 9 Simpson 144, 10 Gregory 142

▶ Josh Coppins

MX1 WHITBY 1-1

"I missed a gear at the start of the first heat and I had to work my way through the pack. I was in third within a few laps though and then I managed to pass Cooper and Noble to take the win.

"I was much happier with my riding in the second race and managed to get to the front pretty soon to win by 30 seconds – my speed was much better and I've got the leader's red plate now. With one round to go it's going to be a pretty exciting final."

whitby or weirdville?

STRANGE SHIZNIT AT SKELDER!

Confusion reigns and programmes flap in MX2 qualifying as two bikes sporting the #211 are spotted on-track during the muddy timed session. The problem's quickly sorted before moto one as Billy Mac's number-nicker Paul Smith – no, not the fashion guru – disposes of a digit deux and runs #11 on his Kawasaki for moto one. The Huddersfield hero fails to make it to the line for the second moto proving Paul really must have some sort of problem with the number two.

There must be something speedy in the water up Whitby way as not one, not two but three – it was so nearly four too – local riders all from within five miles of the Skelder Bank circuit make the cut in the MX1 class. Honda riders Jordan Rose and James Noble are joined by Russ Harland on the startline for the afternoon's two points-paying races while Russ' baby brother Lance just fails to make the cut.

Monster Mark Hucklebridge trades in some ponies for the weekend and drops down a class to the MX2 division. And that's not the only thing Huck drops as it appears a conrod failure in the Innovate Honda drops Mark out of the points in moto two which in turn drops the happiness levels of the Hucklebridge camp – if it wasn't for bad luck, Huck wouldn't know what luck was at all.



RAIN KILLER!

The Brits are in pole position to lift the Trial des Nations – then the heavens open...

Words by Jake Miller Photos by Eric Kitchen



Dougie does his best to help Britain to the win but not even a Lampkin can control the weather



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HAVING ALREADY claimed both the indoor and outdoor world individual titles, Adam Raga makes it a hat-trick of victories by leading the Spanish team to a win at the Trial des Nations.

The British team give the Spanish a real fight and even lead during the early stages before our bid's finally overturned by the weather and we're beaten back to a still brilliant second place ahead of the Japanese.

Held in the Italian ski resort of Sestriere, most of the sections are situated over 2000 metres above sea level. The WTC last came to this beautiful mountain venue back in 2003, when it delivered one of the best trials of that season – and the return to the steep-sided valley is not disappointing.

The Spanish are hot favourites going into the final major international outdoor trial of the year with all four of their riders ranked within the world's top 10. Headed by Raga – and with the supporting cast of Albert Cabestany, Toni Bou and Marc Freixa (the latter being the worst of the bunch but still ranked sixth in the world) – their sheer pedigree is unmatched.

Britain's squad selection by team manager John Collins had been a case of out with the old and in with the new with seasoned campaigner Steve Colley left at home in favour of Shaun Morris following the Manxman's retirement from top level trials at the British GP earlier in the year. Dougie Lampkin, Graham Jarvis and Sam Connor – who is also soon to retire from the world championship – completes the British line-up.

But with a history of recent defeats at the hands of the British, the Spanish know victory's not going to be as academic as it looks on paper. The Trial des Nations is a team event and while their individual rankings may not be as impressive as their Spanish counterparts, the British men have a great tradition of working together as a squad. With Japan the only other team containing four riders ranked in the current top 15, the battle for top honours is realistically always going to be confined to these three nations.

Saturday's inspection of the sections by the riders reveals a good mix of hazards set around the surrounding hillsides, with the severity being very much on the easier side – something now expected in all TdN events to allow for the broad ability range of the competitors. The only concern is if it rains as with the hazards having not been used for two years many of the boulders look to be very green and are certain to get greasy if wet.

With the threat of changing conditions overhead, Britain makes a strong start on the dry Sunday morning by cleaning the opening four sections to take an early lead over both Spain and Japan who record a loss of three and four marks respectively in the second hazard of the day. The Brits maintain their charge through section five where everyone loses marks by matching Spain with two to add to their tally. The Japanese – lead by their typically high-revving captain Takahisa Fujinami – are the best here with the loss of only a single dab.

The first seven hazards are all on dry rocks before the action shifts to the opposite side of the valley. Here the riders face a selection of steep watery sections with a variety of flowing waterfalls and boulder-strewn streams. The shift in terrain does little to upset the Brits as the riders and minders continue to work like a well drilled army unit, notching up another series of cleans and only losing single dab penalties in sections 13 and 16.

Ahead of them the Spanish are also riding well but are unable to match Lampkin and co as they once again part with more marks than their rivals through the closing part of the first lap. The scoreboard back in the centre of town

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The TdN title is the icing on the cake for Raga who's had a sensational season

shows that Britain heads the world on just five marks after the initial lap of 18 hazards with Spain back in second on nine marks, only one better than the Japanese quartet.

The events of the second lap prove to be both dramatic and cruel. Britain brilliantly maintain their charge for the majority of the last lap, despite coming under increasing pressure from the Spanish. The battle is both raw and intense with Raga and his team getting their nose in front for the first time all day – by a single mark – as they clean section 12.

One hazard later and the Brits are back in front and, with their four-mark advantage re-installed, the mood in the team signals that we're ready to record an historic victory.

But their optimism is short-lived as the rain they've been dreading arrives just at the wrong moment. Riding ahead of both Britain and Japan, the luck is with the Spanish as they've nearly finished.

The rain makes conditions in places impossible. No-one in either the Japanese or British teams is able to get through section 14 as the rocks are just too slippery – in contrast, the Spanish lose just three marks here before the rain. The trial is lost in one section and Spain can count themselves fortunate to have stolen the win from Britain.

In the support class the USA record a clear win, beating Australia by nearly 100 marks.



Shaun Morris battles through the rain during the closing stages of lap two



Sam Connor guns his Sherco up the side of an Italian mountain

second helpings

LADIES LOSE OUT ON A PLAY-OFF

Lady Luck is certainly not on the side of the British throughout the weekend with our women's team losing to Germany by a single mark during Saturday's female competition.

The British squad of Maria Conway, Rebecca Cook and Donna Fox actually win the main part of the trial, having beaten everyone over the two laps of 10 sections, but lose out in the controversial eight-section play-off where they re-visit four selected sections twice over.

The British ladies have to wait over an hour-and-a-half to take part in the play-off that takes place 30 minutes after the last team finishes the main trial. The pressure of waiting around and not being able to maintain the momentum they had in the morning session proves the downfall of Conway and co.

The only consolation for the Brits is that they keep Spain back in third place, despite their team being headed by the undisputed ladies champion Laia Sanz.

Donna Fox helps the GB ladies to second behind Germany



results

1 Spain	33
2 Great Britain	45
3 Japan	55
4 Italy	119
5 France	180
6 Czech Republic	276
7 Germany	311
8 Sweden	398
9 Ireland	416



Knighter steps on it in Slovakia – the Manx ace is unbeatable and records the best overall finish of the event

DOMINATION!

Manx enduro ace David Knight stamps his mark on the 80th running of the International Six Days Enduro to become the first Britain to ever win the event outright

Words and photos by Jonty Edmunds

WHEN THE going gets tough, the tough get going – and at this year's ISDE factory KTM rider David Knight gets going in a way no British rider has ever got going before!

David tops the Enduro 3 class on each of the six days to claim a mammoth five-minute advantage come the end of the week and Knighter also tops the overall individual results

the week off brilliantly."

Knighter's not the only British rider to have a good week in Slovakia as each of the six British Trophy Team riders come home with gold medal finishes – despite a last minute change to the team.

Paul Edmondson's switch back to a 250cc two-stroke machine sees the former world

Greg Evans' ISDE ends early – and painfully – with a dislocated wrist



with a near faultless six-day performance of skill, strength and determination. In doing so he helps Britain's Trophy Team finish in a fine fourth place behind Italy, Finland and Sweden.

"It's been a good week," explains Knighter. "I couldn't have asked for things to have gone any better really. I settled myself into the event on day one and knew then that I could win my class so I pushed harder as the week went on and managed to do what I wanted to do – win the event outright."

Dominating the Enduro 3 class – just as he has all year in the WEC series – Knight is in unstoppable form and delivers his knockout blow on day five. With the weather dry up until that point, conditions take a turn for the worse and see most riders swimming around the special tests.

With his closest competitor in the overall standings – Australian Stefan Merriman – struggling to match his pace, David finishes day five comfortably ahead in both the E3 and overall results. And with just the final motocross races ahead of him Knighter knows that he's all but home and dry.

"I wanted to open up a good lead on day four but I couldn't because I got caught out by some rain showers," he points out. "But on day five it was my day. I went for it knowing that a good result would take the pressure off me during the final motocross race. It went exactly to plan and winning my motocross race finished

champion start the week steadily before ending it with a stunning day five performance and a memorable final motocross race.

Settling into the event on days one and two, Eddy's hampered by the fact that the rest of the Enduro 2 big guns are a full 50 numbers behind him. This means special tests that are more slippery for him than they are for his competitors on days one and three but on days two and four Eddy does his bit for Britain before dominating the E2 class on day five.

Known to be a demon in the wet, Edmondson blitzes his rivals to finish close to one-minute ahead of Finn Samuli Aro which lifts Eddy to third in class with just his final motocross race to go.

No slouch when it comes to hurling himself around a motocross track either, Edmondson leads for two laps before his rear brake fades and he decides it's probably not wise to try and stay with battling KTM riders Aro and Kurt Caselli.

"I really enjoyed day five," admits Paul. "Being on a two-stroke was a real advantage. The final motocross went well too. I gated well and really enjoyed it. I think it was a pretty good performance for a 36-year-old – even if I do say so myself."

While Knight and Edmondson are the two British riders who make the biggest impression in their classes, Welshman Rob Jones doesn't even get to start the event on what should



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Paul Edmondson shows there's still life in the old dog with a blistering day five performance

isde



The ISDE isn't just about performance on the bike – competitors have to be pretty handy with the spanners as well



have been his Trophy Team debut.

After suffering with breathing difficulties ever since his arrival in Slovakia, Rob is strongly advised not to compete despite the fact that his bike is sat inside the parc ferme waiting for him. Forced to admit that he's in no fit state to start the six-day competition, Rob is replaced by Army rider Kev Murray on the eve of the event.

Despite having to adjust to racing someone else's 125 when he was entered into the event on a 250, Kev gives his all and impresses his team-mates with his determination – and the way he adjusts to riding Rob's bike. Improving as each day passes, Kev places 22nd in the E1 class which is an impressive result considering he's well and truly thrown in at the deep end at the beginning of the week.

Also in the E1 class are Ed Jones and Si Wakely. Both hoping the event will be a wet one, the fact that just one of the six days is wet doesn't bother the pair.

With Si getting his first Trophy Team call-up he's keen not to do anything silly early on in the week and like most of the team's riders improves his results as the week goes on. Finding life among the E1 WEC regulars extremely competitive, Si finishes highest Brit in his class in 15th.

"It's been a really enjoyable event," reckons Si. "Day five was my best day but it's been a pretty tough week. I'm well happy with my result – it's just a shame it didn't rain more which would have helped the team."

Finishing just one place behind Si is Ed Jones. "I've really enjoyed the event, it's been one of the best six days for several years but the hard ground didn't suit me really," explains Ed. "I suppose I am happy with the way it's gone. I think I could have done better if it was wetter though."

For Euan McConnell the 80th ISDE certainly isn't one of his better six days – but this is not

due to a lack of trying. "I didn't have any major problems but I just didn't have the week I hoped I would," says Euan. "It's been a great event though and the wet day on day five made it a memorable competition."

With the British Trophy Team all earning gold medal finishes the Junior Trophy Team see just one of their four riders make it past day four.

Despite a promising start that has the young Brits fifth at the close of day one, they drop to sixth on day two before placing 11th at the end of day three. At the end of the week they only manage to finish ahead of Venezuela.

Greg Evans is the first to retire when he crashes out with a dislocated wrist. Showing good form on day one, Greg is joined on the injury list by Oliver Moyce who damages his shoulder. That leaves just Tom Sagar and Lee Edmondson in the event until Tom decides to pull out on the fourth day meaning Lee is the only Junior Trophy Team member to finish. ►



Stefan Merriman is the man to beat in the E2 class



Petteri Silvan helps the Finns to second in the Trophy Team overall

While Britain's fortunes are mixed, Italy claim the double topping both the Trophy and Junior Trophy Team competitions. What's more, Italian riders top the club team competition and the Farioli KTM team tops the manufacturers' class.

At the head of the Enduro 1 class Polish rider Bartosz Oblucki claims victory just as he did one year ago. He finishes ahead of Italians Alessandro Belometti and Simone Albergoni. Four-strokes fill the top three places while 125cc two-strokes in the hands of Finn Mika Ahola, Swede Rickard Larsson and Czech rider Roman Michalik round out the top six with Larsson winning the E1 motocross race.

In the Enduro 2 class Aussie Stefan Merriman places his Yamaha one-and-a-half minutes ahead of Finn Samuli Aro to repeat his winning performance from last year's six days. With Edmondson finishing third, Italian Alessandro Botturi, Finn Petri Pohjamo and US

rider Caselli finish fourth, fifth and sixth.

Some five minutes behind Knight in the Enduro 3 class, French Gas Gas rider Seb Guillaume gets the better of Italian Alessandro Zanni to claim the runner-up spot while Portugal's Helder Rodrigues claims fourth with Italian Alessio Paoli fifth.

In the club team section Italian former world champs Giovanni Sala, Stefano Passeri and Mario Rinaldi team up to win the class while Wales B riders Tom Knill, Tim Foreman and Craig Bounds place eighth and are best British team. Wales A hold third in the club section of the competition at the end of the first day with their team of Dylan Jones, Andrew Edwards and Rowan Jones. But Dylan runs into trouble on day four which ends their hopes of a podium finish and sees them place 10th. The only other British club team to get all of its riders to the finish is Team England's Chris Hockey, James Yearley and Andy Frost who place 18th.

results

Trophy Team

1 Italy 25:22.40, 2 Finland 26:34.37, 3 Sweden 36:03.81, 4 Great Britain 38:30.56, 5 Australia 48:10.76, 6 Slovakia 52:13.65, 7 Czech Republic 1:00:31.59, 8 Portugal 1:26:10.88, 9 Netherlands 1:29:31.49, 10 USA 1:32:05.38

Junior Trophy Team

1 Italy 29:42.87, 2 France 36:47.39, 3 Finland 38:35.28, 4 Sweden 49:18.73, 5 Slovakia 1:03:52.03, 6 Czech Republic 1:05:55.36, 7 Australia 1:06:40.44, 8 USA 1:18:31.70, 9 Portugal 1:25:18.45, 10 Netherlands 2:01:43.03, 11 Great Britain 14:31:51.10

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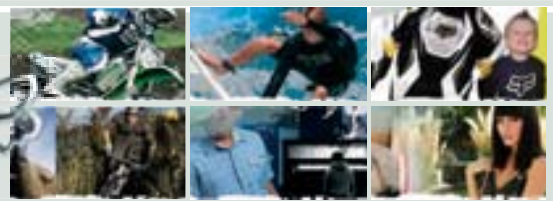
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The Weston dunes are extra tough on an 85



BEACHBOYS!

THERE WAS an awful lot to see and do at Weston. First up were the mini-bike races, then the first ever 65cc race and then – if that wasn't enough – we had a junior quad race and then the 85cc event.

First off, well done to all who took part and gave the huge crowds on both Saturday and Sunday something to shout about.

The nippers on their 65cc machines were out first on Saturday – 30 riders entered and it looked tough going for the small-wheel machines with riders tasting the Weston sand on more than a few occasions.

It was little James Dunn who tamed the Weston dunes with a magnificent first place, putting in 10 quality laps. James took a well deserved win and ended his season on a real high. Two other riders managed to complete 10 tough laps – Harry Bradley and Daniel Thornhill both put in gritty performances in the dry, deep sand of Weston.

And top marks for these little guys for finishing in the top 10 – Ben Howell, Callan

Ashley Greedy is the mini-bike master at Weston



YOUNG	TALENTS
SHARE	THE
WESTON	LIMELIGHT

Cooper, Ayrton Fiorenzio, Corie Southwood, Callum Sloman, Taylor Vernon and Rickie Roderick.

On Saturday afternoon after the main quad and sidecar race the junior quad race took place. This time 32 riders were brave enough to take part on a shortened circuit and each one did themselves proud. First over the line was Gavin Dodds who managed six laps, second was Rhys Guest also on six laps and Ryan Griffin propped up the podium in third.

After last year's success of the 85s, event organisers decided it should be a yearly thing and over 120 kids took to the sands on their BW and SW machines – and boy did this turn out to be a good race.

Steven Clarke hit the front on the first lap but bike problems let him down right in front of me and the race was over for the current world 85cc champion. Jack Cox, Will Worden and Scot James took over and battled hard for the long, tough hour of racing. Each rider held the lead



Jack Gregory gets stuck in on his 65

for a time but it was Jack who crossed the line first after Scot had a mishap on one of the dunes with two laps to go.

Scot recovered for third behind Will who was confident before the race that he would go all out for the win.

Sam Davis, Matthew Moffat, Lloyd Morgan, Jack Rowland, Lewis Tombs, Liam Williams and Ryan Pryor all deserve a mention for finishing in the top 10 in such a tough event.

So Jack Cox reigned supreme at Weston 2005. Jack will now jump up to a 125 machine and you just may see him back next year in the main event – well done Jack!

A special mention goes to Ashley Greedy for taking on some seasoned mini-bike racers and kicking their butts to take the honours – I might even race it next year myself!



Standing room only in the parc ferme

MEGAN'S DIARY

OUR WESTON WONDER PROVES RAY WRONG

SO OUR Rage raw recruit Megan Lewis was going to show the boys how it's done in the 85cc race at Weston. Personally, I didn't think Megan would actually finish but she proved me wrong and went out there and did a grand job.

Here's Megan's diary in the week building up to the toughest race of her career so far...



MONDAY

"I needed to get fit so I went for a jog around the block as I didn't know what to expect of the race."

TUESDAY

"Checked the bike over with dad and made sure that everything was looking cool."

WEDNESDAY

"I went swimming with my sister Maddy – I was feeling a bit nervous by this point but couldn't wait for the race."

THURSDAY

"We left for Weston after school."

FRIDAY

"We camped at a site in Burnham on Sea and later in the day went to check out the track. It looked awesome but the weather was a bit windy. We then signed in and took my KTM to scrutineering where it passed with flying colours."

SATURDAY

"We all went down to see the quad race and watched my hero Laurie Squirell. Laurie did nine fantastic laps, I was so proud of her and I was really determined to prove Chussy wrong and finish the race."

"I went back to the campsite and my mum and dad said we could go to the funfair but we were only there for 15 minutes as we had to take Maddy to hospital after she hurt her neck. We were there for five hours."

RACE DAY

"My dad [could that be mxmegansdad? – RC] had taken two weeks to prepare the bike – I was just hoping it would last. I tried really hard on the first lap and then it seemed to get easier and easier. A few people – including Ray – didn't think I could do it but I did it and I'm so pleased."

"I did six laps and finished in 99th position. I feel proud and really enjoyed the experience and will be definitely doing it again next year."

RAGE

Comment

Injuries are a major concern in youth racing and so many of our top riders are now picking up nasty little niggles. So are our nippers doing too much at an early age and are we letting them back on their bikes too soon after only a few weeks recovery?

Let's put it in another context. Say you break your arm playing rugby and, depending on the break, it takes six weeks to heal. You then go to the gym for another two weeks to build strength in the weakened muscle so possibly eight weeks later you may be playing.

So is it safe for kids to come back after three to four weeks – plaster off on the Friday, racing on the Sunday, jumping 30 feet and riding rough terrain? Do you think that our governing organisations should be looking at this more closely?

Let me know your thoughts on this one as it's a very interesting subject. Talking of injuries, I was lucky enough to spend the day with the Alessis in Ireland but due to me standing on a awning peg and twisting my ankle in full view of everyone at the GP I was unable to make the ACU team event. As Sully put it – "it was 7.6 on the Richter scale when you hit the deck". Anyway, until next month, safe riding!

Chussy



Got any youth news for Rage? Give Ray Chuss a bell on 07773 609994 or email him at talltreephotos@btopenworld.com

RAY'S

RIB-TICKLER!



As you can see from his cheesy grin, Tom Dark will do anything to protect his precious Barnet from the dangers of rain – even if it makes him look like a right Rodney!

MY BEST RACE



NOVEMBER'S BEST race comes from Guernsey-based flyer Craig Rouget. Take it away Craig...

"It was at Abram Park for the British Masters penultimate round. I liked the track as it suited my style of riding. I qualified in sixth position and felt confident that I could improve come the races."

"My first race didn't go so well and I finished in eighth but race two was a different matter. I took the holeshot and led for a lap or so until Daddy passed me. But I gave it my best shot and managed to finish fourth which isn't bad for a Guernsey boy."

"It was definitely my best event I've had at this level. I managed to finish fourth overall and went back to the Channel Islands a happy chappy."



RAGE



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CROWNED!

WITH THE 2005 season done and dusted, all the champions have now been crowned.

It's been a topsy turvy year with event clashes and I hope this doesn't happen in 2006 as, unfortunately, the nippers will suffer because it's impossible for me to cover two events on the same weekend!

Anyway, congratulations to the following riders for performing with true guts and determination throughout the season as this is what makes a champion.



British Masters champ
Shane Carless

PIPPED!

WELL, OUR fantastic dbr team didn't quite manage it two years on the trot! After taking the ACU team title last year we just missed out on the win for a second consecutive season when we were pipped at the post by the West Midlands All Stars.

Unfortunately, I didn't quite make it to Matchams due to twisting my ankle at the Irish GP the day before but team manager Howard Tombs took control and would like to thank everyone involved in our challenge.

So a big thanks to... Meredith Motocross and Fox for the jerseys, Matchams for the use of the circuit and all the riders who represented us so well – Craig Daffin, Chris Bastick, Dorren Coutts, Jake Nichols, Ashley Greedy, Harvey Macdonald, Richie Leech, Alan Keet, Scott Elderfield, Lewis Tombs, James Cole, Lewis Abbott, Jack Rowe, Jake Shipton, Lewis Tricket, Jackson Evans, Rob Muscat, Paul Coates, James Rutts and Sonny Oliver.

Well done lads – we'll be stronger than ever next year!

Youth SX hits the
Millennium Stadium
on December 3

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REGS ARE now available for the eagerly-anticipated Future West World Youth Supercross Championships at the magnificent Millennium Stadium in Cardiff on December 3.



Classes are from Auto to Youth 125/250F and it's going to be one of the biggest youth events to hit our shores in a long while. Imagine a packed stadium cheering on all the British riders – totally awesome dudes!

Contact Future West on 01706 647020 or speak to Debbie or Lester on 07738 089909.

MX TOP TRUMPS

MX Top Trumps

Kieran Mulloy



Age	12
Bike	KTM 85
Years racing	6
Kit	Fox
No of trophies	53
Titles	1
Broken bones	0
Truck/Van	Vauxhall Vivaro

MX Top Trumps

Rik Ruddick



Age	13
Bike	Ruddick & Son Honda
Years racing	2
Kit	Alloy
No of trophies	6
Titles	0
Broken bones	2
Truck/Van	Iveco

BYMX

Ray Rowson – Premier Class
Joe Dark – Intermediate Class
Steven Clarke – BW85 Class
Sam Davis – SW85 Class
Jamie McCanney – 65cc Class

BSMA

Elliott Banks Browne – Senior Group
Kirk Richards – BW85 Class
Josh Spinks – SW85 Class
Robbie Muscat – 65cc Class

BRITISH MASTERS

Shane Carless – Youth 125 Class
Steven Clarke – BW85 Class
Daniel Arnold – SW85 Class
Jamie McCanney – 65cc Class

back passage

Giuseppe was unimpressed by
Martin's karaoke skills

MARTIN MANSBRIDGE IS OWNER AND MD OF MOTORCYCLE PARTS MANUFACTURER AND DISTRIBUTOR BIKE-IT AND THE MAIN SPONSOR OF THE DIXON YAMAHA TEAM. HE'S ALSO THE MONEY MAN BEHIND THE BRITISH GRAND PRIX AND 2006 MOTOCROSS DES NATIONS.

Words by Adam Wheeler Photo by rayarcher.com

dbr: Did going to Ernee allow you to see what staging the Nations next year involves?

MM: "It was a bit of shock to be honest and did get the butterflies going. The success of Ernee also changed a few things around the negotiating table! It was very exciting though because it showed what we have to emulate."

"In one sense it was like 'wow, look what they've done' while in another it was inspiring to know we have the chance to raise the bar higher. I felt that the Nations at Ernee brought the sport up to a level that it deserves."

dbr: Were you surprised by what you saw?

MM: "It was my first Motocross des Nations so it was a bit of a wake-up call. I have been going to more and more world championship events and in comparison the thing that surprised me the most was the passion of the fans – it was amazing to watch."

"The volume that greeted every move the French team made really gave an extra edge to it. It was nice to see the British riders bonding to do their best for the country. To see that team dynamic in such an individual sport was interesting."

dbr: You don't have a motocross background – do you think this will help you when coming to organising a big event? To have that outside perspective?

MM: "I hope so. I am very excited about most motorsports generally – in particular motorcycle sport – and have dabbled with forms of racing. We have a good, experienced team in place for the Nations, together with Steve Dixon."

"These people have an in-depth knowledge of the infrastructure of MX and GPs and can fill in the blanks for me. I'm learning fast and feel there's a good balance to be had from working with specialists like in the Bike-it Yamaha squad and someone who maybe can bring a bit of fresh air. Through our events I want to see the sport and riders get the recognition they deserve and the fans have an exceptional day out."

dbr: Compared to other motorsports, how is motocross different?

MM: "I have sponsored the team for many years and only attended my first British Grand Prix last season – this is something I feel guilty about now having seen the sport close up and how fantastic it is."

"We went to a round of the British championship this season and then to Brands Hatch for the British Superbikes on the Bank Holiday Monday. I was looking forward to both races and I think it was Steve Dixon who pointed it out to me when he said something like don't form an opinion yet but you will probably find that MX 'live' is more exciting than it is on TV whereas road racing is perhaps the other way around."

"I thought it was a good analogy and it is true – I spend most of my time watching

MotoGP on the television now and could not even go to Donington this season because of a prior commitment although I had been visiting for years on end."

"To see motocross live is something else and it really is one of the ultimate spectator sports. Youthstream have brought the GPs up to a good level and while it is still the responsibility of each organiser to ensure the success of each event there is a good base from which to work from now."

dbr: Staging a race like the Nations or British GP is obviously a huge expense...

MM: "There is a massive cost involved in buying the rights to a race and then the organising expense on top of that, maybe many fans are not aware of just how much cash needs to be shelled out for various things. Youthstream have a sanctioning price and this is only fair as they need to cover their management costs and for making international television distribution which is important for sponsors and so on."

"There's a fine balance between creating a good event and making enough money to be able to do it again. I think Youthstream understand that and, importantly, they are very keen to hold events in the UK because they get good audiences and fans that are very passionate about the racing – it's great exposure for them basically."

dbr: It's going to be a big year for Bike-it...

MM: "It is going to be a big year in terms of organisation. Just to give you an example, we had a meeting with the council and police regarding Farleigh Castle for the Nations and they were concerned about the amount of people that would attend the event and whether everyone would be able to get in and out without too much hassle. There was scepticism about facilities and access. We want people to turn up and find a good meeting with decent facilities, what we don't want is people waiting three hours to get out of the car park."

"At the moment we are discussing with some people in the Winchester area regarding the British round of the world championships. If that runs smoothly and subject to negotiations with the council and the governing body then we can think maybe about altering the track and having the Nations at the same location – it's a viable 'plan B'. The facilities in Winchester are fantastic. The venue is set in a valley which will give the track designer good opportunities and also guarantees spectacular viewing. There are also big advantages with regards to traffic and camping areas."

"It will be a busy year for the firm but between everybody we have working on the two races we hope to make it sufficiently profitable that we can use more money to develop the event. It would be foolish to look at this as a short-term, one-year shot."

dbr: Is it possible to make money from a GP and still put on a good show?

MM: "I hope so! If it is not profitable or it doesn't look like it will be then there is little point working your socks off to lose money."

"The man upstairs can have a huge say whether he decides to let it rain or not and this can be a factor that makes or breaks a meeting. We have a provisional confirmation already that the Yanks will be coming and the euphoria of having them as part of the fray will be a big bonus and should help create a memorable show."

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